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PHILLIP ISLAND & SAN REMO

# ADVERTISER

**Your Community Voice!**

Wednesday, January 12, 2022

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## Planting the seed of an idea

Mitch Burrows is writing a 400-plus page, non-profit book, "A Field Guide to the Native Flora of Phillip Island". Perched with illustrator Tegan Carter amongst the spiky coastal hairy spinifex, Mitch is now calling on any community members who would like to share their own stories of local plants to get in contact with him. See page 10 for further details.

## \$12 million battery planned for Gap Road

A 127-metre-long noise barrier will need to be installed at a proposed future \$12 million battery system on Gap Road to ensure it complies with decibel limits.

According to the planning permit application for this project, currently open for public comment through the state government until January 28, a 10MWh lithium iron phosphate battery energy system is being proposed for the north-east corner of 380 Back Beach Road – effectively 100 Gap Road – on land owned by the Bass Coast Shire with the site to be leased from the shire.

The land was purchased by the shire in 2019 as a site for a future Phillip Island Transfer Station and depot. At the time, the shire said only 4.5 hectares of the 45-hectare site would be needed for the transfer station.

The proposed Phillip Island Community Energy Storage System (PICESS) will comprise a series of units in a 38m x 34m fenced compound, connected to the electricity grid via underground cables, set-back 20 metres from Gap Road.

No buildings are proposed on site with control units and other equipment contained in kiosks/cabinets

and a storage container.

Mondo won the right to deliver the battery for AusNet through a competitive tender process and according to Mondo while the battery storage system is not renewable energy generation it will "help balance the fluctuating power demand on the island and support an increase in the uptake of renewable energy".

"It is anticipated the battery will provide services to the community of Phillip Island for 10 to 15 years," Mondo documents state.

"The battery will not provide power to the network when an out-

age occurs. Instead, the battery will provide short term performance improvements to the electricity supply. This service is particularly important during peak holiday periods, especially when there is hot weather.

"We also plan for this battery to enable new technologies and trials and increase the solar capacity on the island."

Although the land falls under the Bass Coast Planning Scheme, the responsible authority for the planning permit is the State Planning Minister.

### Noise, visual

The planning permit states a 3.5-metre-high barrier along the northern boundary of the battery facility, about 300 metres south of Wimbledon Heights, will need to be made of timber, masonry or Colorbond steel.

A planning stage noise assessment from the site states day noise limits should not exceed 45dB, evening 39dB, and night 34dB.

The assessment showed without a barrier noise limits could be exceeded for homes on Ventnor Beach Road.

*Continued page 14*

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7 day weather forecast

Wed/Jan12	Thu/Jan13	Fri/Jan14	Sat/Jan15	Sun/Jan16	Mon/Jan17	Tue/Jan18
						
PARTLY CLOUDY	PARTLY CLOUDY	HUMID/SHOWER OR TWO	HUMID/PARTLY CLOUDY	PARTLY CLOUDY	PARTLY CLOUDY	PARTLY CLOUDY
18 27	18 27	18 26	18 26	17 25	16 19	16 19

## Cowes library services improved

Cowes library services have been boosted following concerns by users of a second-rate system.

Since the Cowes library was closed and demolished in November, local residents say the replacement services fall short and islanders will not have access to full services for at least 15 months once the new Cowes Cultural Centre

is built and opened.

However last week Myli (My Community Library) announced the start of a new home library service, where "library volunteers and staff will build and maintain connections with community members who may not be able to visit their local library".

Myli CEO Leanne Williams said library volunteers will be offering delivery of materials to people who may be physically unable to visit the San Remo library for reasons ranging from lack of transport or mobility, through to caring duties. The service can be temporary or ongoing.

She said potential recipients were invited to register their interest for "this special, personal service".

"Family members or support persons are welcome to enquire on behalf of someone they are caring for or supporting," Leanne said.

"If there's an available volunteer, recipients and volunteers are matched and a friendly relationship often develops between a volunteer and a home library service client, because our volunteers appreciate how important library materials and reading is within our community.

"With the current temporary closure of the Phillip Island Library, we hope to recruit a volunteer team to work from the San Remo Library, to help us deliver this valuable service to those who may not be able to access the San Remo Library, or the 'Click & Collect' service offered through the PICAL location in Cowes."

### New services

Since the closure of Cowes, the San Remo library hours have been extended, open until 6pm, Monday to Friday and Saturdays until 1pm. For those unable to travel, a home delivery



Local resident Gayle Rowden has worked in libraries her whole life and loves them. She said even though the PICAL click and collect was "different from what everyone is used to, it's fantastic having a place in Cowes where you can pick up your 'on holds' and return books".

service via Australia Post is available and a click and collect service at PICAL in Church Street, Cowes (Tuesday afternoons from 1pm, Wednesdays until 2pm, Thursdays until 1pm and a returns chute will be available soon for after-hours returns).

"We understand this does cause some disruption

to library patrons who may be regular visitors to the Cowes library," Michelle said.

As well as a wide selection of books (large print and standard print), magazines, DVDs, and audiobooks, Myli offers e-audiobooks, e-books, e-magazines and online programs and events.

### Frustrations

In December Island Voice spokeswoman Linda Marston asked how library services to Phillip Island would be provided before the new cultural centre was built.

"It seems there is no plan to relocate Phillip Island's library before the new CCC opens," Linda said.

"Surely a temporary site should be found, so the library can provide the full range of services we need."

Long-time library user Gill Scrase said the reduced library services would impact a large section of the community for many months.

"We have a growing Phillip Island community and books are extremely important in our lives for all ages," Gill said.

Cowes resident Sally Matthews said the library closure had left the most vulnerable in the community, such as the elderly and young mums, without resources.

"My mother said the other day, 'the elderly are invisible'. She was referring to the service now offered by the library," she said, adding that her mother lived in Rhyl where postal services were difficult.

Don't hesitate to contact me, I am here to help.



Cr Ron Bauer  
for the Island Ward,  
Bass Coast Shire

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Authorised by Ron Bauer, PO Box 996, Cowes 3922

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LOCALLY OWNED AND OPERATED

# Swathe of new local laws proposed

There will be a clampdown on graffiti, dangerous dogs, electric scooters, and even e-cigarettes under a raft of new local laws proposed by Bass Coast Shire.

The shire is re-writing a vast swathe of its local laws, calling for community feedback until February 13, with further feedback sought on the next stage, the draft Local Law.

The revision includes new items, such as a crackdown on badly behaved short-term commercial holiday home renters (see separate story); mandating businesses to prevent abandoned shopping trolleys; and forcing drone and model plane operators have a permit to fly.

However, there is less certainty about urban wind turbines, with outcry in Surf Beach in 2020 after a resident was set to build a 10.5-metre-high turbine that required no permits.

"There are no existing avenues from a planning, building or environmental perspective that permit council to prevent the construction of a domestic wind turbine," the shire's local law revision summary states.

"We are still exploring the areas (for domestic wind turbines) and are unsure whether these can be included in our new Local Law."

The shire is also exploring whether it is possible to strengthen laws around beekeeping.

In March last year Coronet Bay residents say they were scared to go into their own backyards due to bee swarms from a neighbour's hives.

"The issue of beekeeping in residential areas is a growing source of complaints to council," the local law review states.

The local law review is also seeking to strengthen existing laws.

This includes:

- Camping on private land will be regulated;
- Owners will be required to tidy up unregistered vehicles, vehicle parts, machinery, boats, caravans, trailers and other types of vehicles



Despite howls of protest in Surf Beach in 2020, the shire's local law revision summary states "there are no existing avenues from a planning, building or environmental perspective that permit council to prevent the construction of a domestic wind turbine".

on private property, as well as shipping containers. Likewise for building waste and drainage;

- Property owners must keep their land graffiti free, including 'tags', but excluding permitted graffiti art;

- Where there are dilapidated and derelict buildings or dangerous structures landowners will be required to install temporary fencing whilst issues are being rectified;

- What is and is not allowed on nature strip plantings will be clarified, while unsightly or detrimental weeds must be cleaned up;

- New provisions to address animal noise and smells and new regulations for dogs that have attacked in the past;

- Address the use of electric scooters, vehicles, skateboards, and e-bikes;

- Improve the way advertising signs on private land are regulated; and

- Strengthen the definition of smoking to include vaping and e-cigarettes.

## Feedback

Shire Mayor Cr Michael Whelan said local laws must be reviewed every 10 years, to meet the needs of the community.

"The purpose of this review is to identify what is working well in our current Local Law, any gaps in the legislation and new and emerging issues to be incorporated into the Local Law," Cr Whelan said.

He said there was a summary of key laws that will be changed, deleted or added to.

"We welcome feedback on the proposed changes, as well as anything that is in our current Local Law or anything that you think may be missing. This will help us to draft a new Local Law that meets our community's needs," Cr Whelan said.

"Local Laws address local issues to improve public safety, enhance the liveability of our neighbourhoods and protect public assets."

[www.basscoast.vic.gov.au/local-law](http://www.basscoast.vic.gov.au/local-law)



The proposed bylaw and code of conduct would ensure short-term commercial holiday home party houses would have mandated larger red bins to deal with their red bin overflow.

## 'Party' holiday rentals clampdown delay

Residents who live next to badly behaved short-term commercial holiday home renters have been left vulnerable this summer after anticipated new guidelines failed to eventuate.

After last summer there was an anecdotal increase in complaints from permanent residents who live next to "AirBnb party houses", with one group of visitors in Cowes causing \$30,000 damage at their rental as well as a crime spree in Cowes.

Tradies reported that frustrations from permanent neighbours boiled over, seeing some residents resort to surreptitiously turning the power off at next-door holiday rentals to keep the noise down.

Real estate agents, too, reported

a rise in the number of problematic permanent commercial holiday leases – properties with no local manager – with one agent calling on the shire to convene a round-table to "thrash out" solutions.

The concerns led Bass Coast Shire Cr Ronnie Bauer and Cr Leticia Laing last April to draft the Short Stay Rental Accommodation bylaw and code of conduct.

The draft was based on a Mornington Peninsula Shire by-law and code of conduct and proposed car parking limits, bans on camping, publicly designated 24/7 holiday home contacts, mandated larger red bins, and funds from shire registration directed to enforcement.

Continued page 4

## FORTHCOMING AUCTION

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# 'Party' holiday rentals clampdown delay

*From page 3*  
Last week Cr Bauer said he had hoped the bylaw would have been operational by this summer, however he had been told by shire officers the timeline including public consultation would be in the first half of 2022, with the bylaw ready by June (see separate story).

"It has been a very frustrating process that has dragged along," Cr Bauer told the Advertiser.

"I've been told that a consultant needs to redraft our entire Local Law policy because it's a statutory requirement under Victorian legislation."

## New local law

The proposed new local law will aim to:

- Regulate the control and use of short stay rental accommodation;
- Ensure an appropriate standard of management;
- Minimise the risk of affecting the peace of neighbours;
- Implement a registration and renewal requirement;
- Include a 'maximum stay' duration;
- Ensure any waste is managed to protect the environment.

Cr Bauer said the draft bylaw would be far-reaching.

"It will give the neighbours some recourse to the owner or the agent if something goes wrong, but also rules about what is and is not allowed, such as if you have a three-bedroom house you can't have 30 people stay."

## \$16,000 refund

Meanwhile, CEO Ali Wastie has confirmed the shire has refunded \$16,000 in fees already collected between July 1, 2021, and December 31, 2021 from the shire's holi-

day home register.

The register was started as a way to deal with resident complaints from neighbouring short-term holiday home rentals more than a decade ago.

Ms Wastie said register fees had been refunded to holiday homeowners while the review of the Local Law was being carried out.

"The current Local Law review provides the opportunity to explore options to achieve more effective management of holiday homes and associated issues," Ms Wastie said.

"Placing a temporary hold on fee collection and reviewing the program within the Local Law will allow council to look at how the entire registration process can work better for the local community."

The annual fees from the register are provided to Destination Gippsland (DGL) and Destination Phillip Island (DPI), to support tourism industry development and events.

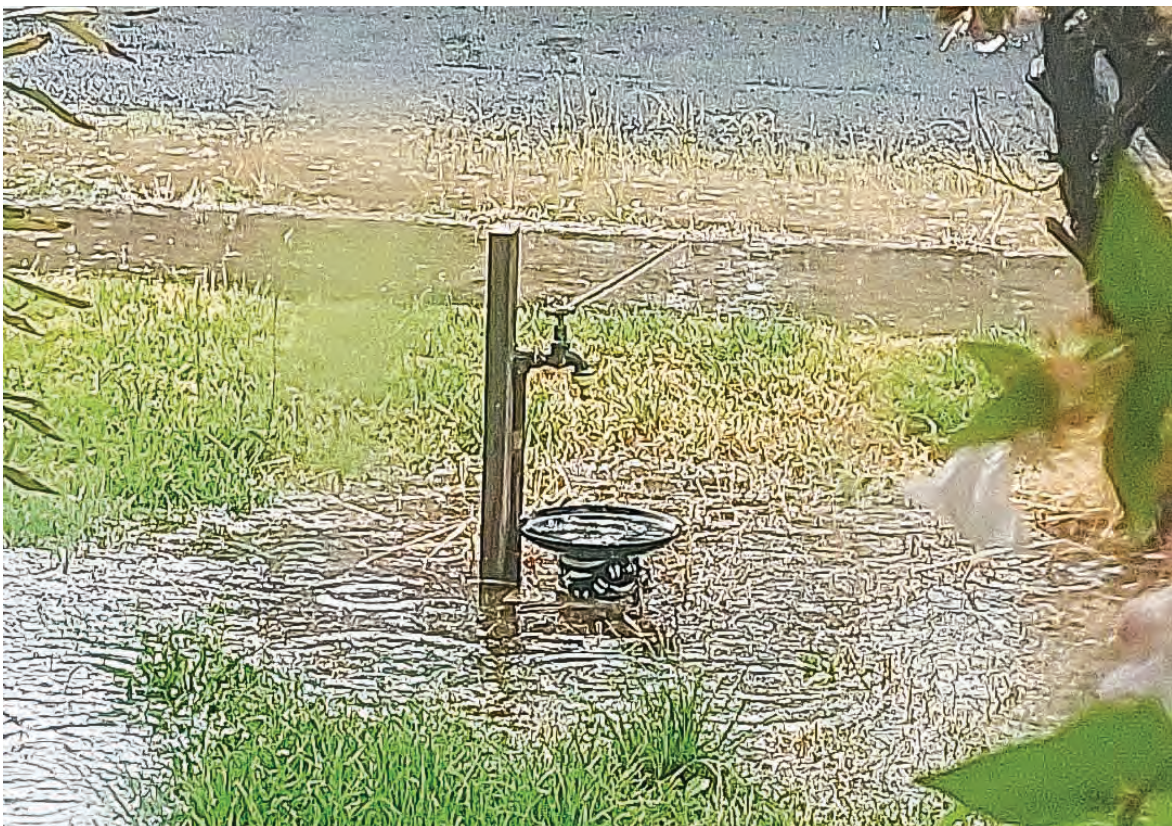
"DGL and DPI have not been adversely impacted as council has funded what would have normally been collected from registrations," Ms Wastie said.

"This review gives us the opportunity to address a number of community concerns raised with us, such as short stay accommodation issues. The new Local Law is anticipated to be adopted by Council by June 2022."

She added the review would bring the fees in line with the financial year (currently collected by calendar year).

Cr Bauer said he did not understand why fees had been refunded and the register was a way to keep track of holiday rental owners.

"The current register is better than none at all."



This Sunderland Bay property had their drain, yard and driveway cop a heavy downpour last Friday.

# Welcome rains drench island

Parts of Phillip Island had minor flooding on Friday after heavy rain saw drains fail to cope.

While other parts of Victoria received significant rainfall on Wednesday and Thursday, Phillip Island missed out, with even Wonthaggi receiving a drenching.

But we quickly made up for it on Friday, with some parts of the island receiving up to 30mm in a short period of time.

Residents around Cowes, Surf Beach and Sunderland Bay reported minor flooding, while the Cowes main street around the medical centre and the BP service station turned into a lake.

Sheep farmer Martin Grachan, who has a property in the middle of Phillip Island, has kept rain records for 20 years.

Martin said the rain was welcome with Phillip Island not receiving any significant drenching since mid-November.

"All up we had about 770mm by mid-November, which is about the average, but after that we received very little, just one, two or maybe four millimetres," Martin said.

"So it was lucky we had a wet 2021."

He said rainfall often split to the north and south of Phillip Island, missing us entirely.

"I'm not sure why, but it can head north to Stony Point and Pakenham and south to Wonthaggi," he said, adding Rhyll and Newhaven tended to get more rain than Cowes.

Martin said farmers had cut plenty of hay this year and a few hot days had managed to kill the worm eggs in the soil, which is good news for livestock farmers.

"I'll still need to drench the sheep but the heat means there will be better results from the drenching."

He added farmers always looked to St Patrick's Day for an autumn break.

Water levels at Candowie reservoir dropped to 89 per cent last week, according to Westernport Water.



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Save Western Port Woodlands spokesman Tim O'Brien with felled mature gums at the Barro site.

## Investigation into sandmine tree removal

A Grantville sandmining company will be investigated by the Victorian mining industry regulator after the alleged removal of hundreds of mature trees in Grantville.

The Save Western Port Woodlands (SWPW) group said they alerted Bass Coast Shire to the removal of two large strips of forest on a proposed sand mining site within the Grantville forest.

At the December council meeting, SWPW member Neil Rankine asked if the shire had given permission to the Barro Group to clear "what appeared to be" a 2000 metre strip of native vegetation, adding up to about five hectares.

SWPW member Tim O'Brien also asked whether the tree removal was authorised.

"Does this operator have approval for this destruction of woodland habitat," Mr O'Brien asked.

"Will council and officers investigate this forest clearing and take action if this activity is unauthorised?"

Shire CEO Ali Wastie said officers would investigate.

"The matter has been referred to Earth Resources Regulator," Ms Wastie said.

Mr O'Brien told the Advertiser if the forest removal was unauthorised, it showed "bloody-minded disregard for the environment".

"We have made an official complaint to council," he said.

"Our understanding, however, is that if a work authority is not in place, this matter falls under council powers relating to the protection of native vegetation under the Planning Scheme.

Mr O'Brien said the Save Western Port Woodlands group had written to Melbourne Water to investigate if the Barro Group had breached Victorian statutes relating to Crown Land vegetation.

"The destruction of forest extends to the edge of the Bass River, and, prima facie, would appear to have strayed onto crown land, which

would constitute a breach.

"We call on the Minister Jaala Pulford to put a stop to this. We remain totally opposed to this destruction of vulnerable coastal forest and of such fragile disappearing habitat."

### Dandy Premix

In 2020 State Planning Minister Richard Wynne used his powers to override the shire and call in plans by another miner, Dandy Premix, to expand their mine, convening a planning panel last March to advise on the application.

There has been no indication when Mr Wynne will make a decision.

If successful Dandy's open cut mine will operate for up to 40 years and remove the equivalent of eight MCGs worth of vegetation.

It would also see 120 trucks every day use the Bass Highway using new traffic lights, which residents say adds up to about four hours of stoppage on the highway.

## Anti-sandmine signs pulled down

Signs on the Bass Highway opposing sandmining in the Grantville forest were again mysteriously pulled down over Christmas.

Save Western Port Woodlands (SWPW) members have pointed the finger at sand mining companies, saying it is the second time in as many weeks.

Spokesman Tim O'Brien said most of the signs were removed in the night.

"If it's the miners, it shows this group is desperate to shut down community discussion about the damage they're doing in that vulnerable coastal forest.

"If the sand miners think that stealing signs is going to deter opposition to their activities within that forest, they have underestimated the strength of feeling in the Bass

Coast community."

Mr O'Brien said the woodlands were the "last left standing in the Bass Coast and Western Port region".

"We call on the Minister for Planning Mr Richard Wynne and Minister for Resources Ms Jaala Pulford to stop this environmental vandalism; these rare coastal woodlands must not be lost to supply sand for Melbourne construction," Mr O'Brien said.

SWPW convenor Catherine Watson said they would not be deterred by the theft of a few signs.

"We invite the Ministers to join our group for a walk in that forest corridor, to have a look at the damage being done, and to reconsider the work authorities allow," Ms Watson said.



Save Western Port Woodlands members Catherine Watson, Neil Rankine and Ed Thexton with the sign opposing sandmining.

# Prepare yourself this summer.



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# Climate change will hit tourism businesses

The tourism industry will need to create all-season attractions because of rising sea levels and destructive storms, according to a new report examining the impact of climate change on Gippsland.

The Gippsland Regional Climate Change Adaptation Strategy, released by the state government at the end of December, does not focus on reducing greenhouse emissions, but instead is about helping the community and business adapt to the changing climate.

The strategy states there is "very high confidence" sea levels will continue to rise through the 21st century following an average rate of rise of 2.1 mm/yr between 1966 and 2009.

At Inverloch, for example, it is expected that by the 2050s the sea level will rise by about 24cm (4mm/yr) compared to the 1990s.

"The expansive Gippsland coast features areas and habitats that are highly vulnerable to impacts and erosion triggered by sea level rise and storm surge events," the strategy states.

As a consequence, the tourism industry, in particular, faces "multiple challenges".

"The impacts of rising sea levels and destructive storms place the attractions and communities along our region's coastline at risk and could heavily affect visitation throughout holiday and summer periods.

"Many operators and communities that have previously relied heavily on seasonal visitation are working towards the opportunities available by making changes and planning to provide year-round products and attractions."

The strategy says the tourism industry needs to diversify with year-round, resilient tourism projects, while there should be support for the tourism sector to plan for extreme events.

"Climate change will impact each part of Gippsland differently. All parts of the community, business, government and industry will need to be involved in some way to best prepare, respond and adapt."

## Bushfire, rain

According to the strategy, Leongatha and nearby areas had up to three days over 35C between 1986 and 2005, and two heatwaves, but by the 2070s it is predicted the town will have 15 days over 35C and seven heatwaves, while there will also be less rain, with between 856mm and 1095mm by the 2070s.

"The bushfires of summer 2019/20 serve as a

recent example that our fire danger periods are projected to lengthen and start earlier," it states.

"Tourism operators have experienced difficulty in attracting visitors following events such as bushfires, even those areas that have not been impacted by fire. Days of higher fire danger also impact the tourism sector as some operators implement planned closures or visitors choose not to travel if it isn't essential."

Longer and hotter periods will also increase the chance of drought and the supply of water, with risks including blue green algal blooms, nutrient loads, pollution and contaminants.

## Economy, health

The strategy explains potential threats to regional economies are broad, including impacts on infrastructure, population relocation, loss of work due to extreme heat, and increases in the price of food.

"Although the most severe and full extent of these threats may be decades away, it will be important to communicate these threats, build understanding and commence appropriate planning."

Temperature increases and reduced rainfall will "greatly impact" agriculture, including dairy, horticulture, and cropping.

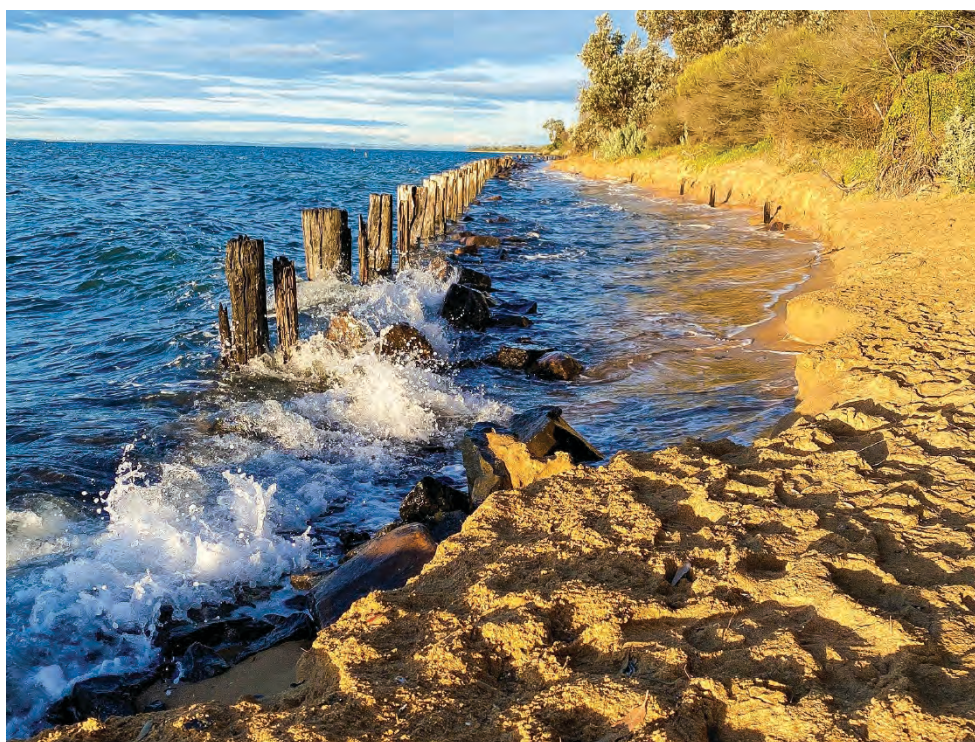
Emergency services will also be stretched responding to events from coastal inundation to flooding, while human health impacts will include heat stress, mental health challenges, air pollution from bushfires, water-borne diseases in drinking water and even diseases transmitted from mosquitos to humans from changes to mosquito breeding habitat.

"The impacts of climate change are evident across Gippsland. Current projections show that the impacts will increase in frequency and severity over the coming decades.

"Without immediate planning and action, we'll face significant impacts upon our built and natural environment, increased costs to build resilience and threats to our regional economy."

The strategy focuses on planning for climate impacts, with previous reports dedicated to reducing emissions and examining the science, including the Gippsland Climate Projections 2019.

"Future climate change scenarios are possible futures and not predictions," it adds. "Climate projections can help guide our decisions on identifying and preparing for future risks."



Rising sea levels – as shown by this picture in Cowes east – will risk tourism through holiday and summer periods, states the new Gippsland Regional Climate Change Adaptation Strategy.

## Gippsland climate projections

**Sea level:** Around the Australian coastline levels rose at an average rate of 2.1mm/yr between 1966 and 2009. From 1993 to 2009, this increased to 3.1mm/yr. Sea levels are expected to continue rising through the 21st century (very high confidence).

**Temperatures:** By the 2030s, increases in daily maximum temperature of 0.9C to 1.8C (since the 1990s) are expected. Maximum and minimum daily temperatures will continue to increase over this century.

**Bushfires:** More dramatic events are likely to occur more frequently and with greater severity. Fire weather has become more dangerous in southern Australia since the mid-

1900s. Fire seasons have become longer and started earlier over this time. This is likely to continue, with the severity of ongoing changes dependent on the emissions pathway that the world follows.

**Rainfall:** will continue to be very variable over time, but over the long term it is expected to continue to decline in winter and spring (medium to high confidence) and autumn (low to medium confidence), but with some chance of little change. Extreme rainfall events are expected to become more intense on average through the century (high confidence) but remain very variable in space and time.

Source: Gippsland Climate Projections 2019



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## Council Update



### Have your say on Local Law Review

Council is currently reviewing its Local Law to ensure it continues to meet community needs. This review aims to identify what is working well, find any gaps in legislation and to create new items to address new and emerging issues.

A Summary of Key Changes has been drafted, which highlights proposed changes to the Local Law. We welcome feedback on these proposed changes, as well as anything that is in our current Local Law or anything that you think may be missing.

You can review this document, our current Local Law (2012), have your say on proposed changes and suggest any new items by visiting [www.basscoast.vic.gov.au/locallaw](http://www.basscoast.vic.gov.au/locallaw)

This draft document is available for feedback from 10 January until 13 February 2022.

Bass Coast Shire Council, 76 McBride Avenue, Wonthaggi | DX 34903 Wonthaggi | PO Box 118, Wonthaggi VIC 3995 | 1300 BCOAST (226 278) or (03) 5671 2211 or via the National Relay Service on 13 36 77  
[basscoast@basscoast.vic.gov.au](mailto:basscoast@basscoast.vic.gov.au) [www.basscoast.vic.gov.au](http://www.basscoast.vic.gov.au)

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A.F.D.A.

# Marine pests would 'decimate' Western Port

Western Port will be monitored for dangerous marine pests, according to the company behind the half-billion-dollar hydrogen trial currently being carried out on the bay.

Starting in March 2021, the Hydrogen Energy Supply Chain Pilot Project (HESC) is the largest hydrogen demonstration project in the world, with Latrobe Valley brown coal turned into hydrogen gas, transported to the Port of Hastings, liquefied, cooled to -253C and shipped to Japan.

Westernport and Peninsula Protection Council (WPPC) and eight environment groups have been calling for the company, Kawasaki Heavy Industries, to conduct their own marine pest surveys as part of the hydrogen trial.

A spokeswoman for Kawasaki last week confirmed to the Advertiser a marine survey would assess shipping movements of its ship, Suiso Frontier (pictured), at the Port of Kobe in Japan and at the Port of Hastings for the risk of pests.

The Suiso Frontier measures 116 metres in length and weighs about 8000 tonnes and is expected in Western Port any time between now and March, she said.

If ballast water needed to be discharged at Hastings, a water treatment facility would be installed on the ship to ensure ballast water was treated prior to being released.

"This would prevent the spread of foreign marine species to the Port of Hastings," the company said.

## Separate survey

Meanwhile, WPPC and Save Westernport were awarded joint funding for their own marine



A marine pest survey will assess shipping movements of this ship, the Suiso Frontier, between the Port of Kobe in Japan and the Port of Hastings, to ensure Western Port bay remains pest free.

pest survey project, carried out last year, which found Western Port's marine environment was "still free from the most invasive pest species".

"Our concern was that Kawasaki was due to begin its hydrogen export trial without addressing the risk of introducing invasive marine pests into Westernport Bay," WPPC's Karri Giles said.

"We oppose plans for the pilot to proceed to the commercial stage that would require the long-term shipping of hydrogen exports from the Port of Hastings to Japan."

"We welcome Kawasaki's agreement to monitor for invasive pests during and after their hydrogen shipping trial."

She said the two worst pests were the Northern Pacific Seastar and Undaria or Japanese kelp, which "can outcompete, overtake and decimate marine ecosystems".

"To avoid bringing them into Westernport we must stop hydrogen exports to Japan."

"It is essential that this threat is taken seriously, so that Western-

port Bay remains pest free."

A single discovery of Japanese kelp was near Flinders pier, which was removed with no further findings, while Northern Pacific Seastar outbreaks have been found and removed in the Gippsland region.

## Tourism

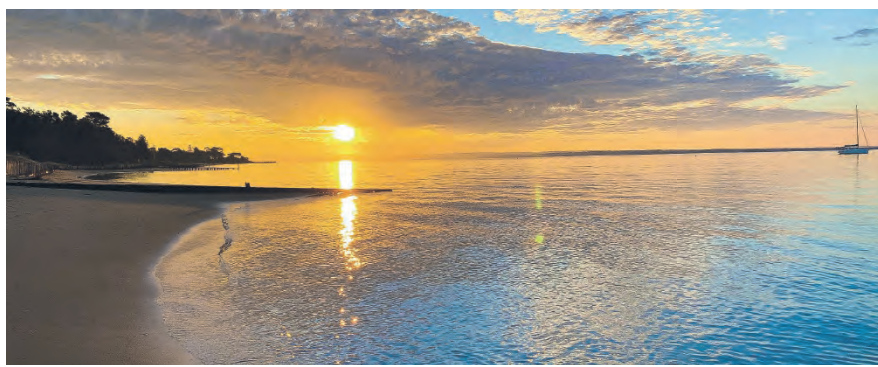
If the HESC pilot is successful, multi-billion-dollar commercial-scale operations would start in the 2030s.

"The primary aim of the HESC pilot phase is to demonstrate that hydrogen can be produced using Latrobe Valley coal and be transported to Japan," Kawasaki said.

The pilot has the support of the Victorian, Commonwealth and Japanese governments.

President of the Phillip Island Conservation Society Jeff Nottle said more than one million tourists visit Phillip Island each year "do not come to see an industrial waterway".

"Heavy industries and eco-tourism do not co-exist and Phillip Island recognises that the environment is our economy," he said.



Western Port bay has a new ally fighting for its protection. The Westernport Conservation Group, formed after successfully fighting two campaigns in the last six years, including the recent battle to stop AG's gas plant.

# New group will fight for Western Port

Western Port bay has a new ally after five conservation groups have come together to form a new alliance.

The Westernport Conservation Group was created last month to protect the bay from industrial threats.

It includes the Phillip Island Conservation Society, Environment Victoria, Westernport Biosphere, Victorian National Parks Association and Save Westernport.

PICS president Jeff Nottle said his group has been at the forefront of establishing the new alliance.

"The WCG group is seeking to ensure the marine and coastal environment of Westernport Bay are effectively managed and restored, and legally protected now and for future generations and that its environmentally sustainable economy is assured," Jeff said.

"Currently management of Western Port is fragmented and there is no overall guiding framework. This presents risks in the form of inappropriate industrial development."

Jeff said WCG had formed after successfully fighting two campaigns in the last six years, including the recent battle to stop AG's gas plant.

"WCG recognises community sentiment for preventing industrialisation is

very strong as was recently shown in the campaign against AG's who were seeking to discharge millions of litres of contaminated water into Westernport.

"The community lodged over 10,000 submissions to the EES hearing into the AG's proposal. This was the largest number of submissions ever lodged for an EES and only the second time in 43 years that the EES stopped the project."

He said the group would be engaging widely with traditional owners and key stakeholders in 2022 and will have a final position in the first half of the year.

"While we meet weekly via zoom we are not in a position to engage more widely at this stage. Further information will be available in the near future."

Jeff said currently there were numerous bodies, authorities and councils who had management responsibilities including the Catchment Management Authority, Melbourne Water, Parks Victoria who look after parks and reserves, local councils which manage foreshore areas, Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning which manage the marine environment and planning approvals, and the Victorian Fisheries Authority, which manage commercial and recreational fishing.



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# ENTERTAINMENT



The Andy Scott Quintet is performing at the Ramada Resort on January 16, presented by the Phillip Island Jazz club.

## Quintet returns to Phillip Island

The Andy Scott Quintet – featuring an ex Daddy Cool drummer – makes a return for the Phillip Island Jazz lunch and show on Sunday, January 16.

Jazz secretary Jill Boyce said Andy was a favourite of the group and had played the January gig for the past few years.

“Once again we look forward to welcoming this fantastic group back,” Jill said.

The quintet consists of Andy Scott (bass and vocals), Stephen Grant (piano), Justin Fermino (tenor sax), Matt Kirsch (guitar) and ex Daddy Cool drummer Gary Young.

“Four of the group have had regular club gigs and Justin Fermino – who performed at the Festival in 2016 with

Cope Street Parade – is now performing at many gigs in Melbourne.

“It will be great to have him back on the Island.”

Cost will be \$40 per head for lunch and show, which also includes a complimentary beer, wine or soft drink.

Covid restrictions in place at the time will apply and lunch will be served between 1-2pm.

Jill said numbers of those attending will be required by tomorrow, Thursday, January 13.

The venue will be the outdoor dining area of Flametrees Restaurant at Ramada Resort, 2128 Phillip Island Road, Cowes.

Please arrange for your tickets early to avoid disappointment.

Advance payments will once again be required: contact Robin – 0432 814 407 or Jill – 0417 416 300.

Another event for the diary: vocalist Sarah MacLaine will be performing, supported by the Tod Sidney group on February 20, with an outdoor lunch and show at Flametrees Restaurant.

On December 19 the Phillip Island Jazz conducted its Jazz Extravaganza and “what a day it was”.

“Three outstanding groups provided six hours of wonderful musical entertainment,” Jill said.

“An almost capacity crowd showed their enthusiasm with rousing support for each of the groups with a couple of standing ovations thrown in.

“What a way to finish 2021.”

## Leongatha art show opens this weekend

The Leongatha art and photography show opens on Saturday, January 15 and runs until February 5.

Leongatha Rotary received over 500 entries for the art show, which promises to continue to be the major art show in the region. The entries cover all categories of art and photography including Youth and All Abilities.

The judge this year is well known artist, Janice Orchard, whose works are hanging throughout the world including Parliament House.

The show is now in its successful

45th year which has given opportunity for local and indeed artists from all over the country to display and sell their works.

In those 45 years over 25,000 works have been displayed. It has also been a major drawcard for people to visit the show and spend time in the region.

The show is open every day from 10am to 4pm, entry is \$5 per person.

Covid requirements and restrictions will apply to the show, so people will need to comply with those requirements to gain entry.



The Leongatha art and photography show opens on Saturday, January 15 and runs until February 5. It is open every day from 10am to 4pm and entry is \$5 per person.

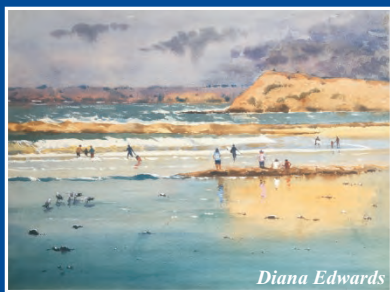
## Special Moments Jan 2022

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David Taylor



Diana Edwards

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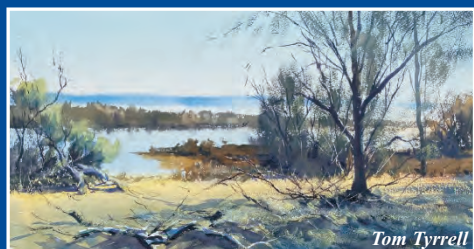
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Tom Tyrrell

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# Calling all native plant lovers

Ever walked on a Phillip Island beach only to find a giant mound of crunchy, silvery-black seaweed that you need to trudge through up to your knees?

Mitch Burrows says it's a particularly Bass Coast kind of experience, with the seagrass – enticingly known as Sea Nymph – rarely found further north.

"Kids grow up with it in kiddie pools and we have all had to wade through it. It's the dried leaves of the seagrass and Kitty Miller Bay, for example, has forests full of it," Mitch says.

"It's a fascinating species that has separate male and female plants. The male releases pollen in the water and by chance it floats past the female's flower, with the offspring taking nine months to grow while still attached to its mum."

Sea Nymph will be just one of about 780 Phillip Island-specific plants to feature in Mitch's new book, "A Field Guide to the Native Flora of Phillip Island."

The 31-year-old, who works for the Nature Parks and lives at San Remo, first started writing it in 2019, after receiving a \$10,000 environment grant, and he says wading through 780 plant species in his spare time means he'll finish it by 2023.

The non-profit guide will focus on about 250 of the most common, significant and threatened of the island's terrestrial and marine plants, with full page or half page descriptions, as well as pencil illustrations by Cape Woolamai artist Tegan Carter, who will sell her prints once the book is released.

Mitch says to write each plant's description, he has waded through the Victorian Biodiversity Atlas and a range of research papers, as well as seeking first-hand accounts from ecologists and local enthusiasts at the Barb Martin Bushbank and Phillip Island Conservation Society (PICS), with all profits from the book going to PICS to preserve native flora.

"A few community members have written stories about their experiences with plants, which adds a human element," says Mitch, who is now calling on any community members who would like to share their own stories to get in contact with him.

"One of the stories I have is of a person's experience watching the life cycle of coastal hairy spinifex – the beauty of its natural geometric patterns."

Mitch, a keen surfer, admits most of his age-group don't share his passion for plants.

"A lot of people I get along with in the plant world are aged in their 60s or 70s."



Author and Nature parks ranger Mitch Burrows with illustrator Tegan Carter tossing Sea Nymph into the air, which is commonly found on northern beaches of Phillip Island. The plant is included in a book they are producing, "A Field Guide to the Native Flora of Phillip Island".

## Planting the seed

Mitch grew up in Newcastle and studied a science degree, followed by honours in marine science, finishing in 2013.

It was while studying the oyster farming industry that he first became interested in seagrasses, then for two years volunteered on whale research projects in Queensland and even later had a stint working on one of Australia's first medicinal cannabis farms.

He moved to Phillip Island in 2015, initially working as a surf instructor for Ash Belsar's Outthere Outdoor Activities and then in 2016 was employed by the Phillip Island Nature Parks as a field services officer.

In this job, Mitch is a nesting shorebird officer, ensuring critically endangered species such as migratory waders and hooded plovers are protected through monitoring and building refuges.

He also works in weed management and revegetation.

"People don't often see the work that is being carried out but at Observation Point at Rhyll, for instance, a few years ago it was overrun with a weed called polygala but now, through weed removal work, it's full of native grasslands, herbs and succulents."

"It's important to care about these plants because if these systems are healthy, there's a flow on."

"Monocultures reduce biodiversity and effect other species, even through to migratory birds. It's important the links in the chain aren't broken."

While he doesn't "hate" any plant, nonetheless his least favourite is agapanthus, a common flower in local gar-

dens because they form "huge monocultures that reduce biodiversity".

## Book

Mitch says the idea for the book initially sprang from his own need for a guide to Phillip Island native plants.

"I realised there wasn't one so I decided to write one myself."

"A lot of people aren't engaged with – or have a limited relationship with – their local environment."

"The island's plants have drastically changed since European settlement."

"So the purpose of the book is to help people be more aware of the plants around them so they can help those plants thrive."

The Barb Martin Bushbank on the Phillip Island Road has a species list of about 70 plants for sale, all native to the island.

So for Mitch to boost that list to 780 was no mean feat, although he adds the guide will also include mosses, ferns and seagrasses such as Sea Nymph and mangroves.

It is, he admits, a labour of love to compile the list, adding that he is equally happy surfing, bird watching or observing plants.

"Plants offer a lot of wisdom and there's a lot to learn from them, which is more of a traditional approach rather than a western way of seeing the world."

"They indicate the transition between seasons, whether they're in flower or fruit, and can even tell us about climate change."

"It's when you are able to interpret them that you can share their language."



Illustrator Tegan Carter is drawing more than 250 images such as this one for the non-profit book, "A Field Guide to the Native Flora of Phillip Island".

# Art with heart

Tegan Carter has come face-to-face with a copperhead snake, navigated treacherous clifftops and criss-crossed Phillip Island.

All for one selfless purpose: to capture images of rare and threatened plants, or those common to Phillip Island for a non-profit book, "A Field Guide to the Native Flora of Phillip Island".

The 32-year-old illustrator is drawing more than 250 images for the guide, which is being written by her mate and fellow conservationist Mitch Burrows (see separate story).

"Both Mitch and I knew doing the book was not about financial gain," Tegan says.

"We are both committed to it because we want to give back. Neither of us will probably live on Phillip Island forever so it's something I'd like to leave behind."

Starting in 2020, all up it will take Tegan about three years to research each species and complete detailed black pen on paper drawings.

She first got to know Mitch when they were both working as Phillip Island Nature Parks rangers and had a shared love of the local flora.

Tegan then went on to work as a vet nurse at the Cowes vet clinic.

She has so far dedicated countless hours to intimately understanding her subject, firstly researching images and descriptions online and in books, before taking to the field to hunt out specimens for photos.

"Some of them are simple to identify but some are harder to find and identify and I have to

speak to the experts, like John Edie (at the Phillip Island Conservation Society PICS) or James (at the Barb Martin Bushbank).

"Doing this work has led me to all corners of the island. It has made me observe and appreciate the environment more than just going for a walk. There's so much diversity here, even in a patch of grass."

Illustrations take about a day to complete and Tegan hopes to have an exhibition of her work alongside the book launch, where she will sell limited edition prints or originals.

## Why care?

Tegan grew up in Seaford and in 2010 studied a diploma of illustration, with her preferred medium pen and pencil and her favourite subject animals, including pet portraits.

She says the idea of Mitch's book appealed because all funds will go to protect vegetation on the island, through PICS.

"I'd love for this book at some point to maybe get me work in the field of drawing for conservation projects. I'd prefer to create art that has a purpose."

Tegan encourages all local residents to plant more native species.

"It's important because if we don't care about these plants they may not be here. In a short period of time they could disappear if we don't look after them."

"There are already so many species rare and threatened on the island and if people aren't aware of them or don't protect them then we'll lose this precious vegetation."

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THIS FRIDAY!



Girls on Board provides a safe and welcoming space for girls and women who want to learn how to surf.  
Photo: Tommy Williams

## Life’s a beach – in and out of the water

For over a decade, Jess Laing has run the Girls on Board surf school, encouraging girls and women to grab a board and head into the waves.

Now she’s taking her love of the beach to a new level, opening a shop in the Cowes Bazaar in Thompson Avenue to share some of her favourite things with all beach lovers, not just surfers.

Most days in the past ten years, Jess has been in the water surfing or teaching. When Covid struck, unable to run her lessons, she found herself at a loose end.

“I was feeling flat and I didn’t have much to do,” Jess said.

“So I decided to start a project.”

That project was to create a retail space dedicated to her love of the surf, the beach and travel.

“It gave me a lot to do during lockdown. I really wanted a space to put all the things I loved together in one spot.”

The store is located within the Cowes Bazaar, and Jess is quick to explain it’s not like your regular surf shop.

“This has more of a lifestyle vibe. We’ve got artwork, surf books, towels, Girls on Board clothing, surf hats, summer surf suits and our own beau-

tiful Phillip Island beach-themed candles.”

The unique Girls on Board designs have come about through local and world-wide collaborations.

“Some of the t-shirts have been printed locally, some in Tooradin. I’ve had all different people do the designs,” Jess said.

“Some are friends, and an artist called Surfy Birdy based in Costa Rica designed some.

“There’s a women’s surf Facebook group that connects women all around the world and I put a shout out on there and was contacted by all these different artists. That’s where I connected with Surfy Birdy.”

Another collaboration with Roam Slow Studio saw a Cape Woolamai print drawn up and created for the shop.

Being based in the Cowes Bazaar means although the shop is open seven days a week, from 10am until 5pm, Jess doesn’t have to be out of the water and is still free to run her popular surf classes.

### Surf school

Girls on Board provides a safe and welcoming space for girls and wom-

en who want to learn how to surf.

All the coaches are female, and they are all Surfing Australia accredited.

Over the years, Jess said she’s seen a change in who is signing up for classes.

“When I started, I was mainly teaching young girls, but now I’m teaching more women.

“We run a women’s program now throughout the year that goes for four to six weeks. The same group meets up every week for a session.

“It’s really good. People make new friends and find their own little group to go surfing with.

“We do run female specific classes, but we do lessons for the guys too,” Jess said, with lessons ranging from beginners to those wanting to improve their skills.

She said surfing is great for keeping both your mind and body healthy.

“Regardless of why people come for a lesson, we aim to provide a nurturing, safe, inclusive, personalised and fun experience for people of all ages.”

Over summer, lessons run every day. You can view the lesson schedule and book online at [www.girlson-board.com.au](http://www.girlson-board.com.au)

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Girls on Board shop in the Cowes Bazaar in Thompson Avenue includes artwork, surf books, towels, Girls on Board clothing, surf hats, summer surf suits and Phillip Island beach-themed candles.



## Please obey dog beach rules

Dog owners are flouting beach rules and putting wildlife at risk, according to reports over the summer holidays.

Local residents, including dog owners, took to social media over the past few weeks to call on dog owners to follow local rules, including bans on dogs on Nature Parks beaches.

Heather Hammond posted a comment on social media saying she had to ask people to remove their dog from Kitty Miller Bay.

“The tiny hooded plovers are struggling here,” wrote Heather, adding nature was “something to respect and feel privileged to be around”.

“Dogs don’t have to chase them. They just have to accidentally crush their eggs running past. Or step on marble sized chicks unintentionally.

“People don’t really understand the ramifications of what happens when the dogs start running, or even kids and adults. I’m sure if they did they’d get on board.”

Sus Wick said at Surf Beach and Forrest Caves dogs were off-leash, giving “all dog owners a bad rap unfortunately”.

“It’s a real shame people do not appreciate or understand the delicate wildlife situation we have,” Sus commented.

Mary Harnan agreed: “I am a dog owner and quite shocked at the number of dogs off lead around Ventnor, on crown land, on beaches and dogs on beach when not supposed to be.”

Others on social media reported a rise in dog poo bags lying on beaches, as well as dog on-leash signs being pulled down, with many agreeing holiday season meant visitors didn’t understand local rules.

Some said there was not enough enforcement by Bass Coast Shire rangers, while others said they had seen rangers being “abused” by dog owners.

### New rules

The reports follow a surprise victory for dog owners when Bass Coast Shire councillors in December voted in support of new measures to allow more time – and new areas – to walk their four-legged friends, which will take effect from February.

New rules will include: extend off-leash dog beach access 350 metres from McKenzie Road, Cowes, to 50 metres short of Anderson boat ramp and at San Remo from the existing Foots Beach through to Marine Parade; allow access to off-leash dog beaches annually from February 1 to December 10, effective from February 1, 2022; from December 1 to February 1 dogs must be on a leash on the dog off-leash areas from 10am-6pm, with dogs currently not allowed on beaches at all in that period on Phillip Island; and provide dog waste bags and dispensers at all current dog beach entrances across the Bass Coast Shire.

When asked if the shire would be able to meet the February deadline for waste bags, shire CEO Ali Wastie said officers would immediately start the process to procure suitable dog waste bags and dispensers.

She confirmed the vote impacted all shire managed beaches: Cape Paterson, Inverloch, Ventnor, Cape Woolamai, Cowes West and San Remo.

“This will be for all council managed beaches that have time restrictions starting in December and ending in April where dogs are allowed to be off lead,” Ms Wastie said.

Currently there are varying off-leash rules across the shire.

At Kilcunda, for example, dogs on-leash are allowed on shire-managed beaches at all times, with an off-leash area around the Kilcunda caravan park.



A dog lover says dogs don’t have to chase endangered hooded plovers to hurt them, “they just have to accidentally crush their eggs running past or step on marble sized chicks unintentionally”.

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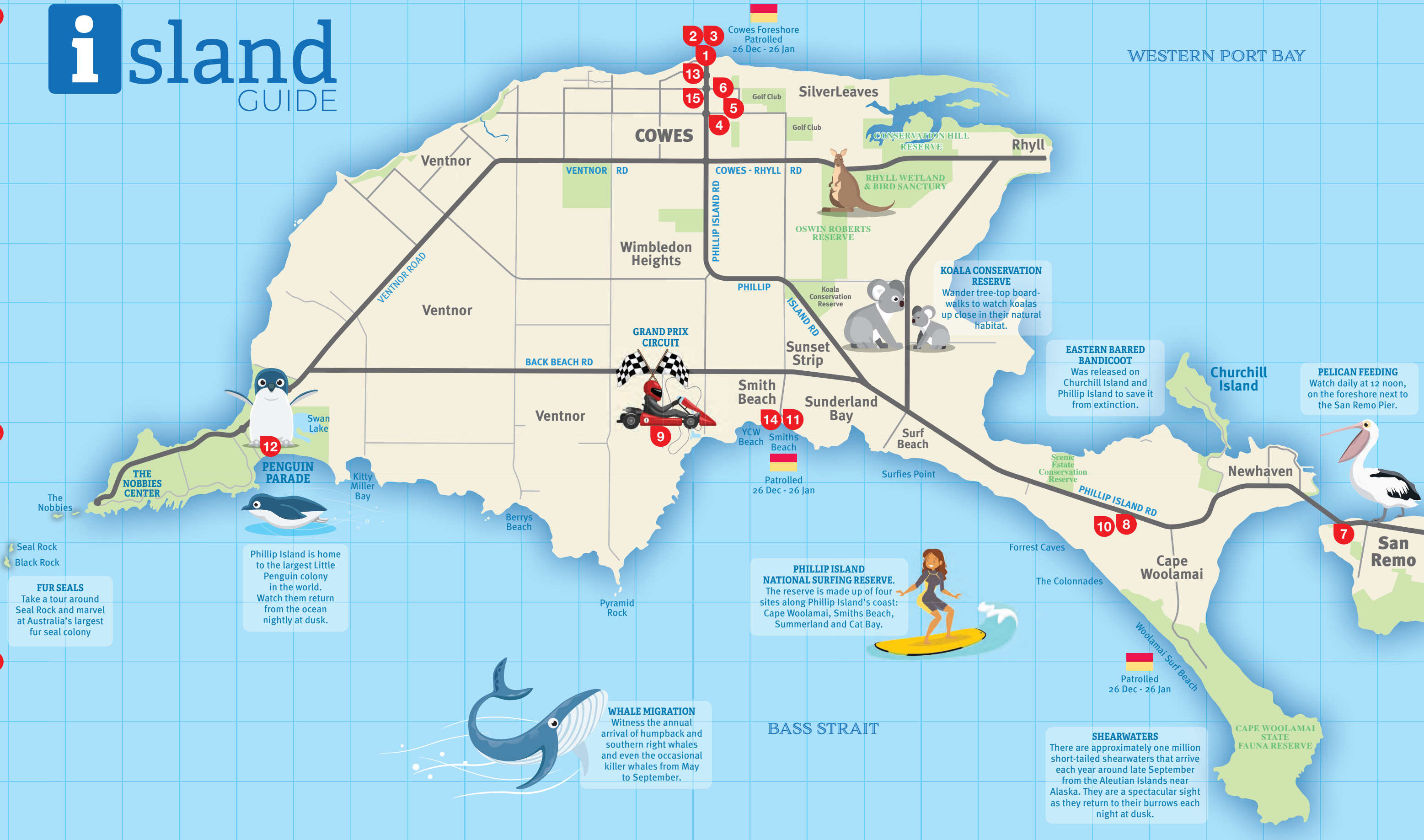
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# \$12 million battery planned for Gap Road

From page 1

The barrier would be constructed in two sections, with 46 metres at the eastern section and 81 metres at the western section.

The permit states that during the detailed design the need for the barrier would be reviewed, based on which battery packs and inverters – the loudest items of equipment – were chosen and located.

The planning permit also states landscape screening along Gap Road and the northern boundary will ensure that the development has limited visual impact.

“A far greater visual impact from

key viewpoints in the public realm will arise from the proposed council waste transfer facility immediately to the south,” states the planning permit report.

An engagement report states Mondo has sent letters to and visited neighbouring properties, including the nearby Shearing Shed wedding venue, with leaflets dropped in Wimbledon Heights, as well as a pop-up event, and an online meeting held in October for 40 residents.

The battery is supported by Totally Renewable Phillip Island (TRPI) and the Energy Innovation Cooperative (EIC) because it helps a transition to a low carbon economy with greenhouse emission reductions.

“PICESSE will enhance network reliability, drive down electricity prices and support the state’s energy transition to a renewable energy future. The project provides demonstrable benefits to industry and the community,” states the permit.

“Long-duration energy storage technologies will play an increasingly important role in our electricity system as Victoria transitions from coal-fired generation to renewables.”

## Vegetation, fire, traffic

The battery’s construction will require the removal of endangered plant species including swamp scrub. “The proposal will have a minor

but overall acceptable native vegetation impact that can be addressed via the purchase of native vegetation offsets,” states the permit.

There are also “listed” or threatened bird species in the area “however these are highly mobile species and able to avoid any disturbances caused by works”.

Because the battery will be remotely managed, the traffic and transport demand will be minimal with the main impacts during the construction phase.

About 20 documents accompany the planning permit, including a bushfire assessment, rated as low risk.

“There is also the risk of fire directly associated with the facility

in addition to bushfire risk. This should be addressed separately, although the proposed facility includes a fire detection and suppression system.”

According to Mondo, the battery will be energised in the third quarter of 2022, requiring an initial testing period.

A community information session is being organised for January 20, with details of location and times still to be finalised.

A copy of the application is available on the Department of Environment Land Water and Planning website.

For details email: development.approvals@delwp.vic.gov.au

## KEEP IT LOCAL

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**phillip island INTERIORS**  
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@phillipislandinteriors

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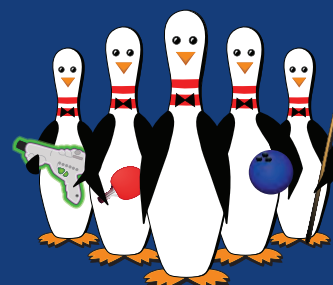
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Support the businesses at the heart of our community

# Ensuring Bass Coast is fire ready for summer

As the fire season approaches, Bass Coast agencies have been working hard to ensure the region is prepared while locals and visitors are being invited to learn more about fire safety.

The Fire Danger Period for Bass Coast has been declared from January 10 to May 1.

Bass Coast's Fire Risk Working Group makes sure our region is fire ready through the Municipal Fire Management Plan, which identifies different levels of bush-fire risk for different localities and identifies how to reduce the risk.

Members include the CFA, Victoria Police, Parks Victoria, the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP), Phillip Island Nature Parks, Bass Coast Shire Council and VicRoads.

The agencies work together with AusNet Services, Westernport Water and South Gippsland Water to plan for potential bushfire emergencies in Bass Coast.

Phillip Island Nature Parks Ranger in Charge Ben Thomas said the Nature Parks was busy preparing for the fire season with rangers undergoing firefighter training, a new dedicated fire unit introduced, and extra resourcing brought in for slashing and widening fire breaks.

"Our primary prevention activities include vegetation management and slashing of strategic fuel breaks near residential areas, along with education, ranger patrols and enforcing park regulations," Mr Thomas said.

Tim Bessell-Browne, Parks Victoria, Ranger in Charge - Fire and Emergency (South Gippsland District) said Parks Victoria was also well prepared.

"Parks Victoria is well prepared for the upcoming fire season with our seasonal Project Fire Fighter staff recruited, trained and ready to respond with the wider Parks team in the event of fire. Parks Victoria



Local agencies are prepared for this year's fire season. From left to right: Ben Thomas (PINP), Brian Martin, Parks Victoria; Joseph Alexander (DELWP), Acting Senior Sergeant Scott Morison, Joe Myall (Phillip Island Fire Brigade) and Corin Spencer (BCSC).

works as part of Forest Fire Management Victoria and other partners, including the Country Fire Authority, to respond to fires across private and public land," he said.

"The recent spring season has seen an amazing grass growing period. If we have a dry spell in the area, this grass will dry out and pose a higher risk of fast moving grass fires. Our team are working hard to keep this grass down by slashing fuel breaks and access trails."

Bass Coast Shire Council Mayor, Cr Michael Whelan, says it's important to be vigilant about fuel loads.

"It's fair to say that we've been distracted by the pandemic for the last two years but we shouldn't forget the horrors of the Black Summer bushfires in late 2019 and early 2020.

"These were devastating for so many Gippsland communities as well as our tourism businesses.

"We all have a part to play to keep our fuel loads down and minimise the risk of anything like this happening again.

"Fast-moving grass fires are the biggest risk in Bass Coast and can

catch people off-guard. We are used to the green countryside and may not notice that the fire danger has increased significantly after a few hot and windy days.

"As of January 1, under the Local Laws, we'll be issuing a \$300 infringement to property owners within the townships with reported grass over 30cm long.

"Council Fire Prevention Officers have also been inspecting blocks and issuing a Notice to Comply to property owners with long grass and they then have 21 days to cut it or Council organises a contractor to do it, with the property owner bearing the cost.

"We're keen to have a safe summer season that's enjoyable for everyone and don't forget to download the VicEmergency app."

Locals and visitors had the opportunity to ask any questions about fire safety with the CFA's Community Education Trailer visiting the various parts of the region, including Silverleaves Store yesterday (January 11) and the Grantville Transaction Centre today (January 12) from 2pm - 4pm.

"The CFA Community Educa-

tion Trailer offered residents and visitors to Bass Coast an opportunity to ask any question about fire safety, whether it be summer fire safety and what to do on those high fire danger days, through to home fire safety matters such as smoke alarms and how to make your home safer from fire," said Bass Coast Group Officer Damien O'Connor, talking on behalf of brigades in Bass Coast.

"If you are a local or a visitor to Bass Coast, you must have a Plan of what you and your family will do on those high risk fire danger days. It's important to have a plan for those Fire Danger Rating days of Severe, Extreme and Code Red to not be around areas of high risk and look at alternative activities for the day."

Victoria Police will be conducting targeted patrols during the Fire Danger Period. Anyone detected lighting fires or using illegal fireworks during the Fire Danger Period will be prosecuted.

Anyone who sees anything suspicious is encouraged to contact Police on 000 or Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000.

## Anderson Street Reserve gets a revamp

San Remo's Anderson Street Reserve is set for a "seniors-friendly" makeover.

Following community consultation last year, a master plan was created for the 130-year-old, 1.2ha council-owned reserve, which Bass Coast Shire councillors approved at the December meeting.

The reserve currently has a picnic table, two bench seats, and a "few lonely small trees", according to Cr Rochelle Halstead.

But, she said, a \$416,000 makeover would include "seniors-friendly gym equipment and walking tracks", as well as a rotunda, park furniture, trees and landscaping.

"Of course catering to young ones as well."

Cr Michael Whelan said the reserve was valued by the San Remo community.

"The master plan has been developed to guide the future use and investment for the reserve," he explained.

The reserve - positioned at



The new design for San Remo's Anderson Street Reserve

one of the highest points of San Remo, providing views to Cape Woolamai - has a historical significance and was gazetted as a site for public recreation in 1888.

In June drop-in consultation sessions were attended by about 30 people, in addition to 15 emails and phone conversations.

The shire employed Or-

chard Design Landscape Architects to then create the master plan, which was on display in September.

There is currently about \$303,000 in funds for San Remo parks, with local developers' contribution paying for pathways.

Details: [www.basscoast.vic.gov.au/anderson-streserve](http://www.basscoast.vic.gov.au/anderson-streserve)

## WONTHAGGI UNION COMMUNITY ARTS CENTRE

### FILM FESTIVAL Bass Coast Shorts

Fri 21 Jan 7.00pm  
Sat 22 Jan 4.00pm 7.00pm

Bass Coast Shire Council, in conjunction with the Australian Short Films Festival, is proud to present a regional short film festival - Bass Coast Shorts, presenting short films of different genres and categories.

## 2022 EVENTS LIVE ON STAGE

### LIVE MUSIC Nicki sings Carole King

Fri 11 Mar 7.30pm



### LIVE MUSIC Lior - Solo

Sat 26 Mar 8.00pm



Wonthaggi Union Community Arts Centre

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[www.wonthaggiartscentre.com.au](http://www.wonthaggiartscentre.com.au)  
phone: 03 5671 2470



## WONTHAGGI UNION COMMUNITY ARTS CENTRE

### Summer Cinema



#### Encanto [PG] 1h47mins

Tue 11 Jan 4.30pm  
Fri 14 Jan 10.00am  
Tue 18 Jan 10.00am



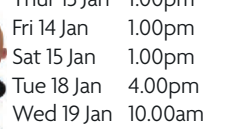
#### Clifford the Big Red Dog [PG] 1h30mins

Tue 11 Jan 10.00am  
Wed 12 Jan 4.00pm  
Thur 13 Jan 1.00pm



#### Boss Baby [PG] 1h48mins

Wed 12 Jan 1.00pm  
Sat 15 Jan 10.00am



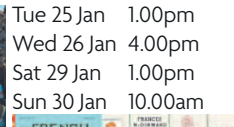
#### The French Dispatch [M] 1h48mins

Thur 13 Jan 10.00am  
Sat 15 Jan 1.00pm  
Tue 18 Jan 4.00pm  
Wed 19 Jan 10.00am  
Thur 20 Jan 1.00pm  
Fri 21 Jan 10.00am  
Sat 22 Jan 1.30pm  
Sun 23 Jan 10.00am  
Tue 25 Jan 1.00pm  
Wed 26 Jan 4.00pm  
Sat 29 Jan 1.00pm  
Sun 30 Jan 10.00am



#### Welcome to Smellville [PG] 1h25mins

Wed 19 Jan 4.00pm  
Thur 20 Jan 4.00pm  
Sun 23 Jan 1.00pm  
Tue 25 Jan 10.00am



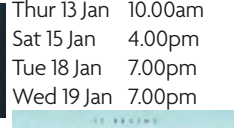
#### Dune [M] 2h43mins

Thur 13 Jan 10.00am  
Sat 15 Jan 4.00pm  
Tue 18 Jan 7.00pm  
Wed 19 Jan 7.00pm



#### Dear Evan Hansen [M] 2h17mins

Tue 11 Jan 7.00pm  
Wed 12 Jan 10.00am  
Tue 18 Jan 1.00pm  
Thur 20 Jan 7.00pm



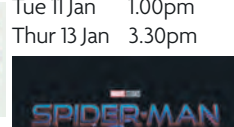
#### Spider-Man: No Way Home [M] 2h28mins

Thur 13 Jan 7.00pm  
Fri 14 Jan 3.30pm  
Sat 15 Jan 7.00pm  
Wed 19 Jan 12.30pm  
Fri 21 Jan 1.00pm  
Sat 22 Jan 10.00am  
Sun 23 Jan 4.00pm



#### Cry Macho [M] 1h44mins

Wed 12 Jan 7.00pm  
Fri 14 Jan 7.00pm  
Thur 20 Jan 10.00am



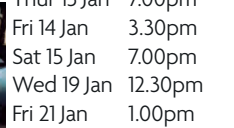
#### Ghostbusters: Afterlife [PG] 2h04mins

Sun 23 Jan 7.15pm  
Tue 25 Jan 7.00pm  
Wed 26 Jan 7.00pm  
Sat 29 Jan 10.00am  
Sun 30 Jan 12.30pm



#### Licorice Pizza [M] 2h13mins

Tue 25 Jan 4.00pm  
Sat 29 Jan 7.00pm  
Sun 30 Jan 4.00pm



#### West Side Story [M] 2h36mins

Sat 29 Jan 3.30pm  
Sun 30 Jan 7.00pm



#### À Bout de Souffle 10.45pm

Chacun Chez Soi 1.00pm



#### Boîte Noire 4.00pm

Police 7.00pm

## BCFFG - Opening 2022 Season Sunday 16 January



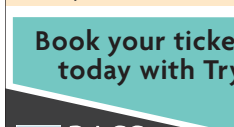
#### À Bout de Souffle 10.45pm

Chacun Chez Soi 1.00pm



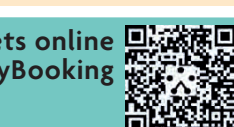
#### Boîte Noire 4.00pm

Police 7.00pm



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# Planning: our future

*In this second week of a new series – which explores planning: our future – we look at traffic and parking. Each week we are featuring a column by the local Progress Association, Island Voice, as well as feature stories. Phillip Island – and to a lesser extent San Remo – are natural bottlenecks and with the resident and tourist population growing annually, pinch points are quickly seen in congestion on roads and towns. Here we explore the pressures and possible solutions.*

## Planning: traffic and parking

It's a simple formula: more residents and more tourists means more cars, more congestion and more parking problems. Here are a few current examples of where traffic is reaching a tipping point.

### COWES SENSOR PARKING

Late last year Bass Coast Shire announced a surprise \$300,000 "Smart Parking" project will see about 500 car parks in Thompson Avenue, Chapel Street, The Esplanade and the Cowes Transit Centre installed with sensors from February 2022.

In Wonthaggi there will be 225 on-street bays.

And none in Inverloch.

An optional app will let drivers pre-plan parking, while six message signs will be installed in Cowes to display real-time parking availability, for drivers who don't use the app.

The vast majority of comments on the Advertiser's Facebook page opposed the technology, arguing that while it wasn't paid



parking, it would undoubtedly see more residents fined in the 10 months of the year that were off-peak.

### SAN REMO, MARINE PARADE

Late last year Bass Coast Shire rolled out new one- and two-hour parking limits on Marine Parade in a bid to deal with increasing parking demand.

But many traders said it made operating their enterprises difficult and was resulting in gridlock on side streets such as Wynne, Back Beach and Edgar roads.

Floss Gorsuch, who owns The Wash Shop laundromat, said the new restrictions were unworkable.

"The V-Line bus service now has no parking and the rec centre is 800 metres away. How are the elderly meant to walk that distance? The shire have put no thought into this



at all," she said.

San Remo Fisherman's Co-op manager Paul Mannix said the new

restrictions next to the co-op – five x 1 hour parking limits – were frustrating, especially for staff.

### PHILLIP ISLAND ROAD: SAN REMO AND NEWHAVEN

Regional Roads Victoria has been seeking government funding for plans for San Remo – released in 2020 – that include adding traffic lights to Marine Parade, widening the Phillip Island Road to four lanes between San Remo Parade and Bergin Grove, and even reclaiming a section of Western Port to accommodate the expansion.

Since 2012 residents have also been lobbying for improved internal roads to deal with massive housing subdivision growth, detailed in 2012 in Bass Coast Shire's San Remo Access Strategy, including an extension of Shetland Heights Road to Wonthaggi.

RRV said future planning for the Phillip Island Road corridor included these internal roads.

The Newhaven plans included four lanes on the Phillip Island Road between two new roundabouts at Forrest Avenue and



Boys Home Road.

The plans have apparently been put on ice, however RRV has yet to confirm this.

A group of businesses – who were set to lose a chunk of land

under compulsory acquisition as part of RRV's plans – in 2020 said they were unable to support the road upgrade, saying RRV should not apply "city solutions" to "our magical island community."

### PHILLIP ISLAND ROAD

In 2017 Regional Roads Victoria mooted double lanes through Surf Beach, suggesting Phillip Island Road could be a dual lane highway, around that time approaching adjacent landholders to discuss acquiring land to accommodate the expanded road.

Many residents responded saying they didn't want to see "Gold Coast-style" development.

Bass Coast Shire councillor Michael Whelan at the time warned Phillip Island's lifestyle should not be destroyed to cater to congestion, calling for smarter traffic management across the island.

The Victorian National Trust also rejected the push for a four-lane highway.

"Preserving the integrity of the destination, not detracting from it, should be the main aim," the Bass branch of the National Trust stated.

"The road strategy for the island raises broader issues around the natural environment of the island, landscape and scenic values, heritage and township character, and consideration of other options available to best handle increasing visitor numbers and tourist traffic."

The National Trust suggested better options would include the use of park-and-drive buses at peak periods, expanded public transport, and more cycling and walking paths.



### SMITHS BEACH

A masterplan to find solutions to the growing congestion in Smiths Beach was last year released by Bass Coast Shire.

Smiths Beach Association president Phil Dressing said the plan was needed to address the impact of the growing number of visitors to the hamlet.

"If there are more people coming to the island, including to Smiths Beach, how will we manage them in terms of infrastructure and the environment?" he said.

In creating the plan, the shire commissioned a car parking and traffic assessment in January last year.

Based on a 28C Saturday, Smiths Beach car park was at 100 per cent capacity by 11am (and anecdotally 100 per cent full by 9am), with the majority of cars parked for more than four hours.

YCW Beach car park was 80 per cent full by 11am and remained so



for most of the day, while parking also spilt into neighbouring streets including Marlin Street, Barramundi Avenue, and Hollywood Crescent.

The community panel – formed to give input into the plan – agreed

traffic was a problem, describing it as "crazy" in summer, and suggesting such solutions as restrictions, parking fees, park and drive, clearways, patrols and offering more patrolled beaches around Phillip Island.



A coalition of Phillip Island community groups has been lobbying for a speed reduction on island roads to protect wildlife.

### Next round of speed limit review

The second stage of the Phillip Island speed limit review should include dusk-to-dawn variable speed signs to protect wildlife, which would be a Victorian-first, according to the peak conservation group.

At the end of last year, Regional Roads Victoria rolled out new speed limits across the island. Just under 10 roads previously zoned 100km/hr are now reduced to 80km, including Berrys Beach, Ventnor Beach and Back Beach roads.

In addition, three roads previously zoned 80km/hr were reduced to 60km: Coghlan Road (between Settlement Road and Cowes-Rhyll Road), Grossard Point Road and Ventnor Beach Road.

RRV said stage two of the speed review was yet to be funded but technical reviews had begun. This stage will focus on high-speed unsealed roads managed by Bass Coast Shire, who will lead the review.

Phillip Island Conservation Society president Jeff Nottle said the second stage should include dusk-to-dawn speed differentials displayed on flashing signs.

"Key wildlife corridor roads should have dynamic speed signs and sunset to sunrise speed differentials while temporary speed limits should operate during Shearwater migration," Jeff said.

"PICS firmly believes our recommended speed limits should be strongly supported with creative signage that includes a very prominent gateway sign in Newhaven, and elsewhere on high-risk corridors, with a simple message to Drive Carefully for Wildlife.

"Nowhere in Victoria has it ever been accepted to have speed differentials for wildlife, although they do operate for schools and weather conditions such as fog."

### Cowes-Rhyll

Jeff said the flashing signs and varying speed limits should particularly be introduced on the Cowes-Rhyll Road.

The road is a major roadkill hotspot

and conservationists were disappointed it was not among the zones to drop from 80km to 60km, after the head of Phillip Island's peak transport company Michael Wright voiced concern a speed reduction there would harm his taxi and bus company.

"In the case of the Cowes-Rhyll Road, which is one of the most notorious road-kill routes on the island, we acknowledge that a 60km/hr limit during daylight hours is unlikely to be observed, given the traffic volumes and length of the link.

"We have therefore proposed a limit of 70km/hr in daylight hours and 50km/hr during the period of highest risk to wildlife, between sunset and sunrise.

"I strongly recommend that dynamic speed signs be used on this road to highlight the high risk and the time dependent nature of that risk."

Jeff said while RRV typically preferred speed limits to be in 20km increments (40, 60, 80 etc) "we also believe the speed limits should not be that rigid".

Michael Wright said he supported varying limits.

"Dynamic signage may be the best solution for Cowes-Rhyll Road in the future. I will continue to advocate for Coghlan Road not to be reclassified," Michael said.

### Safer, not faster

Department of Transport Gippsland Acting Director Henry Lam acknowledged Coghlan and Cowes-Rhyll roads were "important routes for freight and industry", but they were still under consideration.

"Phillip Island is unlike any other part of Victoria. Despite the introduction of various treatments over the years which aimed to reduce crashes with wildlife, we haven't had enough of a reduction of crashes with animals.

"Getting there faster does not mean getting there safer. As a community, we should never value shaving a couple of minutes off our journey over potentially losing a life or causing a life-changing injury."

## Stop them at the bridge?

"The primary justification is simple, that a natural resource is degraded and destroyed by excessive use. Bondi Beach can accommodate huge crowds – but we doubt that is what the public wants from Phillip Island. To keep it as 'natural' coastline, therefore, it is at least time to begin thinking about ways of limiting access. Late arrivals cannot enter a football ground when it is full. Several means are available. The first is to turn people away at the bridge, the cut-off point being determined by the traffic count. Another method is to limit car parking and to enforce regulations against illegal parking so that



people to go elsewhere as social tensions increase. Control at the bridge is the simplest measure: such controls are commonplace in state and national parks in the USA, where regular radio broadcasts give bulletins on the capacity of the more popular parks, so that the number of those actually turned away at the gates is reduced by forewarning." - "Phillip Island: Capability, Conflict and Compromise", by the Centre for Environmental Studies, University of Melbourne, 1975



### PLANNING: OUR FUTURE

## What's our game plan?

A series of weekly columns on planning issues by Island Voice

Have you struggled to find parking in town during peak season?

But wasn't the Transit Centre built to cope with this extra demand?

Yes it was, but the spaces are effectively being used for other purposes.

Parking waivers are requests from developers to council that allow them to reduce – or eliminate – the number of car park spaces they need to build by using public spaces to meet their obligations.

Waivers are a good thing for developers, as providing fewer spaces reduces building costs and increases profits.

But this is a bad thing for the community, as it reduces the number of parking spaces for visitors, shoppers and users of community facilities.

Waivers have been approved over many years and while there is no way to track the cumulative effect of this, complaints about parking during high season suggest this is becoming problematic and that action is required.

The Transit Centre provides 123 all-day spaces to allow visitors to park and visit the beach, lunch and shop at leisure.

It's easy to see how parking can become limited when a proposed hotel/residential development in Thompson Avenue seeks a waiver for 40 places, a real estate agent seeks 13, and the new Cultural Centre will require 46 additional spaces than it had previously.

The new Community Hospital will probably need some of these spaces when it is built, but that is a building that will provide great benefit to the community and Island Voice believes that it is appropriate to use spaces for this purpose.

Also the Covid testing station is temporarily located there, and while we welcome its presence, it reduces parking capacity significantly.

There is also the annual issue of a lack of visitor spaces at various caravan parks, which have inadequate onsite parking for clients or visitors, yet benefit at the expense of their neighbours who experience great inconvenience.

When will this improve? Increases in housing density mean more cars in residential streets.

Waiving car parking requirements in residential areas causes problems for neighbours, town congestion, loss of relaxed seaside

character and may limit emergency access, putting lives and property at risk.

Island Voice believes that waiving parking requirements must stop.

The council has recently indicated it intends to install smart parking to aid people finding vacant spots.

The system will provide electronic information about parking behaviour and assist traffic inspectors to enforce time restrictions for vehicles that over-stay.

This system will cost about \$300-\$400,000 (plus annual maintenance fees).

Surely, if the issue is that people don't know where to find free, all-day parking at the Transit Centre then it would cost far less to signpost it properly?

Bass Coast Shire has stated smart parking will not mean paid parking.

However in their Long Term Financial Plan, parking is identified as a potential income stream worth several million dollars.

What is the true situation here?

Will electronic notifications of limited numbers of parking spots in prime locations see drivers compete to secure one?

And what happens if they are beaten to it?

Potential benefits of the system will only be realised during peak visitor periods (about five weeks per year), so we have to ask: how will this system benefit the community during the rest of the year?

Will these measures remain in place all year, affecting residents out of season, when there is no shortage of parking, or will the system be turned off?

How can this system pay for itself when the demand for parking is so seasonal?

We have been telling people to "relax you're on Island time" for many years.

So it seems strange we intend to give visitors a different message with the use of big city solutions in our seaside town.

Instead of "sea, sand and fun" perhaps we will become "sea, sand and fine".

Island Voice calls for council to refuse parking waivers, except in the case of buildings that provide great community benefit and also rethink the implementation of smart parking.

If you feel strongly about any of these issues, please let your councillors and CEO know and remember to raise it when the public engagement on planning takes place this year.

## Is a bridge toll a solution?

The Phillip Island and San Remo Visitor Economy Strategy, written in 2016, states Phillip Island should have an optimum capacity limit of 24,500 visitors per day, while the bridge has a carrying capacity of 1500 vehicles per hour.

The strategy states the island receives 18 per cent of its annual visitation in January, which is about 28,600 visitors per day on a peak day.

"While the region's infrastructure copes with this level of visitation, its optimum capacity is slightly lower than these peaks," the strategy states.

"It is the aim of this strategy to shift demand to off-peak periods."

Visitor numbers to Phillip Island and San Remo could reach nearly 3.5 million visitors by 2035, it said.

Yet despite this, the island has seen a decline in spending per visitor since 2008.

A high proportion of day visitors means the average length of stay is much lower than the state average.

As such, the strategy recommends the focus should be on quality of spend rather than quantity of visitors.

It proposes introducing a bridge toll with the option for pricing incentives

for travel outside peak travel periods, as well as park-and-drive where possible to make congestion more sustainable.

### Car parking squeeze

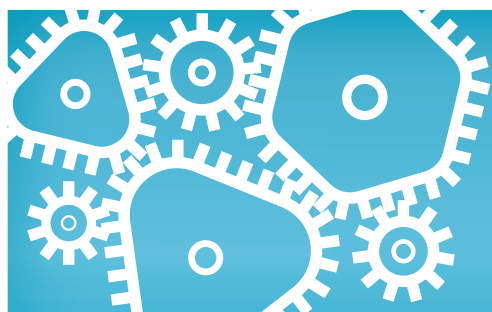
Also in 2016, Bass Coast Shire released the Cowes Revitalisation Project Traffic Management Impact Assessment to ease the town's increased parking and traffic congestion.

It showed Phillip Island Road carries about 10,000 vehicles per day during off-peak periods, which rises to 14,000 per day in holiday seasons and is growing at five per cent annually, with Cowes needing 310 additional car parks by 2016 and 630 by 2036.

The report proposed speed limits in Cowes' town centre be decreased to give pedestrians more priority, while parallel parking should replace the current angled parking, and in the future multi-deck car parks could be introduced.

"Modelling shows the roads in the centre of the study area are nearing saturation levels," the report states.

"Through analysis, an issue facing Cowes transport system now and over the next 20 years is car parking."



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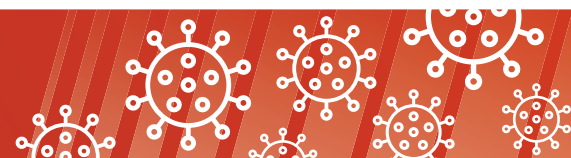
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# Covid again cripples local businesses

Businesses across Phillip Island and San Remo are being forced to close in the wake of staff shortages and health risks due to COVID-19.

Following the forced closures in lockdowns, a surge in coronavirus cases has now seen businesses voluntarily and temporarily close their doors at the peak of the tourist season, including the Phillip Island Winery, Anerie Bistro, Hotel and the San Remo Post Office.

The Westernport Hotel in San Remo closed on January 7 until today (Wednesday), explaining "it's time for us to bunker down for a few days".

Phillip Island Winery said with "dwindling staff and the sheer amount of daily cases" they could not trade safely, closing from Saturday to today.

Bang Bang restaurant and bar in Cape Woolamai shut last week until early this week "for the safety of staff, friends, family and customers".

"So let's all pull together. Once we all open up let's do what we do best and support our local small business again," Bang Bang management said on Instagram.

"Let's hope we are nearing the end of these weird times. Stay safe and stay sane."

Cowes Central Café last week posted a social media message saying due to staff shortages with Covid symptoms, they would close until further notice "for staff and patron safety".

Anerie Bistro in Thompson Avenue posted a



*In the past week, many local businesses, including the San Remo post office and The Westernport Hotel, Anerie Bistro and Hotel in Cowes, and Bang Bang in Cape Woolamai closed their doors due to staff shortages and Covid health risks.*

message saying like their industry peers, they had been hit with staff shortages arising from increasing COVID-19.

"Our priority is to provide a safe and enjoyable experience for our patrons and team and with this in mind we have made the very difficult decision to close the restaurant from January 5 to 7," owner Cryss said.

"This is harder than it has ever been, having only been open eight months and as a new business we have tried everything to maintain our integrity and keep our doors open, however now with no government support and not even the ability to get a supply of RAT tests so our team can be kept safe, times are even more

challenging."

Pino's Trattoria in Cowes posted a message on social media saying they were "hanging on by a thread" and were operating with a small crew.

Last week Hotel on the Cowes Esplanade was closed until further notice "due to health and safety concerns not only for our staff but everyone", and on Tuesday, Phillip Island Strawberries announced it had closed its doors.

The San Remo Post Office and newsagent closed after staff were notified as close contacts.

"As there are no Rapid Antigen Tests available, to make sure that we are doing the right thing by the community and ourselves all of us

are heading for a PCR today," post office management said on social media.

"I'm not sure when we will be opening but I will keep posting."

San Remo IGA said they would suspend home deliveries "for the time being due to Covid and the number of staff members we have isolating at the moment", while Coles and Woolworths also suspended deliveries.

## Concern

The Phillip Island Community Noticeboard Facebook site saw debate about why businesses had to shut, with one respondent saying plenty of people needed work.

"I don't think it is because people don't want to work. Lots are getting sick or close contacts so can't go to work," Chris Legg replied.

Many pointed to the lack of affordable housing for low-income earners.

One hospitality business owner who came down with Covid said they didn't blame tourists, locals or the government.

"It is what it is. My partner now can't run it on his own as he is my close contact. He isn't sick but doesn't want to make our older customers sick," the business owner said.

"It's not a matter of just finding staff and staying open. You have to have food handlers' licences and experience.

"If they could stay open, they would. Please people, be kind to one another. Closing is a last resort."

## Numbers soar with tests hard to find

Covid cases in Bass Coast continue to rise, with case numbers almost six times higher than they were on January 1.

The high case numbers have been recorded despite an acute lack of rapid antigen tests (RAT) and the indefinite closure of the Cowes drive through clinic.

According to state government figures released on Monday, there were 637 recorded

cases in the shire. Wonthaggi was leading the way with 175 infections, followed by Cowes (138), Inverloch (122) and San Remo (91).

However Infectious disease modeller Michael Lydeamore from Monash University told ABC News that Victoria is reaching a point where official case numbers are almost meaningless, due to the high proportion of positive tests.

Public health officials say a big proportion of

cases is likely being undetected, due to issues with accessing PCR tests and the shortage of available rapid antigen tests.

## Testing times

The Wonthaggi drive through clinic is currently operating from 9am - 4pm, but most days the clinic is closing early, due to high demand. Updates on queue times and closures are posted on the Bass Coast Health Facebook page.

BCH advises that only people who have Covid symptoms or tested positive on a RAT need to get a PCR test.

People who are required to use a RAT (for example, asymptomatic household contacts) but who cannot access one, can also get a PCR.

The state government website states anyone else without symptoms who wants to check if they have Covid should not get a PCR test. They should use a RAT and if one isn't available, continue to monitor for symptoms and follow all

the CovidSafe advice.

Tests can also be booked at the Wonthaggi Respiratory Clinic on 0492 036 568.

With health systems increasingly under stress, the government has provided advice on managing Covid symptoms at home: [www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/managing-covid-19-home](http://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/managing-covid-19-home)

## Vaccines

The Community Vaccination Clinic at the Wonthaggi Town Hall is also experiencing high demand and BCH is urging people to phone 1800 675 398 or go online to make an appointment.

On Monday, by 10am it was no longer taking further walk-ins due to the high demand.

Vaccinations are also available through GPs and select local pharmacies including Cowes Priceline Pharmacy and Terry White Chemmart and the San Remo Pharmacy.



## Be A Good Sort!

Using bins inside your home or holiday house in colours that match Council's kerbside bins makes it easy to sort waste appropriately at the point of disposal.

There are many different styles of coloured internal bins available from a variety of manufacturers, so choose the style that's right for your home.

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## Supermarkets shelves bare

Supermarket shoppers are being greeted with empty shelves as local stores struggle to maintain stock.

The combination of supply chain issues and high numbers of staff off work - either testing positive or being a close contact - is responsible.

Transport and distribution services are being hit hard by Covid cases, with the Transport Workers union reporting at least a third of the country's truck drivers are off work.

San Remo IGA said due to depleted staff numbers the store was closing earlier than normal and home deliveries had been put on hold.

Coles CEO Steven Cain said the supermarket chain was dealing with supply chain issues, as well as staff shortages.

"We're asking customers to bear with us and be flexible for now by trying a different brand or product until we can get the entire range back into stores."

Coles has introduced temporary limits of two packs per customer on in-demand products such as chicken breasts and thighs, mince and sausages.

He said demand for rapid antigen tests had "skyrocketed" and while millions of packs were being delivered to stores and extra supplies had been ordered, it was not keeping up with demand. A limit of one packet per customer has been introduced and the packs are not available online.

Woolworths' Chief Executive Brad Banducci last week told the ABC that more than 20 per cent of distribution centre staff and more than 10 per cent of store workers were absent.



*A familiar sight. Once again, the toilet paper shelves at Woolworths in Cowes were empty, as supermarkets struggle with supply chains.*

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**DIXON, John Warley:**  
13/8/1938 - 5/1/2022  
The Funeral Service for Mr John Warley Dixon will be held at St John's Uniting Church, Chapel St Cowes on Wednesday (Jan 12th) commencing at 12.00pm.

PRIVATE BURIAL  
livestream link:  
<https://www.bellfuneralservices.com.au/john-warley-dixon/>

Harris Family Funerals  
9562 3224

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**REITH, Vivian:**  
The Funeral Service for Mrs. Vivian Reith will be held at St. John's Uniting Church, Chapel Street, Cowes on Wednesday 12th January, 2022, commencing at 3.00pm.

At the conclusion of the service the funeral will leave for the Phillip Island Cemetery.

Vivian's service will be live streamed. Please go to [www.handleyanandersonfunerals.com.au](http://www.handleyanandersonfunerals.com.au) for details.

In lieu of flowers, donations to The Vivian Docking Reith Fund (Bass Coast Community Foundation). Envelopes will be available at the service.

If you wish to donate to this Fund you can visit the Bass Coast Community Foundation website [www.bccf.org.au](http://www.bccf.org.au) in order to make an online donation.

Handley & Anderson

## SITUATIONS VACANT


The image features the Capeview Building Products logo at the top, with 'Capeview' in a large, white, sans-serif font and 'building products' in a smaller, blue, sans-serif font below it. To the right of the logo, the text 'FULL-TIME POSITIONS AVAILABLE' is written in a large, bold, white, sans-serif font. Below this, a paragraph in a smaller, white, sans-serif font states: 'Capeview Building Products is a leading manufacturer of quality frames, trusses, windows and joinery and has been supplying the local building industry for over 50 years. Due to increased demand, we have a number of great ongoing employment opportunities available, including:'. This is followed by a list of six job roles, each preceded by a white bullet point. The roles are: 'Roof Truss Fabricator', 'Wall Frame Fabricator', 'Aluminium Window and Door Fabricator', 'Apprentice Cabinetmaker', 'Qualified Cabinetmaker', 'Truck Driver', 'Delivery Assist Person', 'Kitchen Sales Representative/Designer', 'Workplace Health and Safety Advisor'. At the bottom, a white paragraph encourages further action: 'For more details and to apply, please visit [www.capeviewbuildingproducts.com.au/careers](http://www.capeviewbuildingproducts.com.au/careers)'. The entire advertisement is set against a dark blue background.

## PUBLIC NOTICES


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Applications close 4.00pm, Friday 21 January 2022 and should be submitted to  
[katrina.lawrence@newhavencol.vic.edu.au](mailto:katrina.lawrence@newhavencol.vic.edu.au)

*Newhaven College is a child safe environment. Every child has a right to be safe, and at the College we have a zero tolerance for child safety risks (including child abuse and reportable conduct). As such, preferred applicants will be subject to child protection screening, background and reference checks, verification of identity checks and must adhere to the College's child safe practices, as outlined in the Child Protection Program policies available on the College website.*

### PUBLIC NOTICES

1 in 5 people in Australia will experience depression.

Find out more at  
[www.beyondblue.org.au](http://www.beyondblue.org.au)  
or call 1300 22 4636.



MSC7939

Initiative of Phillip Island  
Masonic Lodge

And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus"

Philippians 4:7 NIV

**ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS:** Weekly meetings Bass Coast Shire, Wonthaggi - Tuesday 8pm; AA Cowes Big Book meeting at St Philip's Church (opp. Coles) - Tuesday 7pm, 0417 317 470; Salvation Army building, McKenzie St., Wonthaggi, Saturday 11am, 5672 3627. Phone head office 9429 1833.

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# 2022 school intake reflects changing population

Local education in 2022 is set for a big shake up, with new facilities opening and a change in population demographics in the wake of Covid.

Some schools have experienced a boom in enrolments, others have had losses, while two new facilities will be opened: San Remo's Bass Coast College (years 7-9) and an extension to the Phillip Island Early Learning Centre (PIELC), ahead of the roll out of funded three-year-old kinder this year.

As part of state government changes, Bass Coast Shire now runs the central enrolment system for pre-school and kindergarten.

According to shire figures, there are 280 three-year-olds enrolled for kindergarten in 2022: Cowes 71, San Remo 44, and Corinella 26.

And for four-year-old kindergarten there are just under 400, including: Cowes 129, San Remo 62, and Corinella 31, with Bass Valley Children's Centre at Corinella at the end of last year receiving State Government funding for a two-room expansion or 66 additional licensed



Phillip Island Early Learning Centre co-ordinator Karen Treppo: "We've definitely had more of an increase since Covid and people moving to the area."

places.

PIELC coordinator Karen Treppo said their \$687,000 kindergarten upgrade includes a new room to the existing long day care and sessional kindergarten, which caters for an increase of 39 licenced places, and nine new sessional four-year-old places.

The extension is the second in the PIELC's history, which was first opened in

2012 and received a new portable for four and five-year-olds in 2020.

"Ever since we opened we have had huge demand and always had a wait list. We opened with 106 children per day and next year we'll have 170 per day but potentially a total of 300 in a week because of our varied programs," Karen said.

"We've definitely had more of an increase since Covid and people moving

to the area."

At San Remo, 10 months of construction will see the launch of the new Bass Coast College at the start of term one.

Wonthaggi Secondary College principal Darren Parker said they would have about 420 students at the beginning of the school year at the new campus.

"We can't wait to show off the new facilities," Mr Parker said.

Total enrolment at the college will be more than 1600 students, up from 1510 in 2021.

#### Decrease

Our Lady Star of the Sea Catholic primary school in Cowes, which opened in 2018, will have an intake of 104 for 2022, a jump on last year's intake of about 80.

Cowes Primary School principal Rod McKenzie said their enrolments were down on last year.

"We will move from 24 to 23 classes in 2022," he said.

"There has also been a number of families move to Melbourne and interstate. Some other families have been disrupted as a result of the changing housing market.

"Covid has caused lots of disruption and migration."

Newhaven College principal Tony Corr said there would be 130 new students to the college, including 44 in prep and 60 in year 7.

"Our numbers have remained consistently high as per previous years."

Numbers were not available for the Village School or San Remo and Newhaven primary schools.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Tell us your views with a Letter to the Editor (350 word limit). Email to [advertiser@pisra.com.au](mailto:advertiser@pisra.com.au), or submit online at [pisra.com.au](http://pisra.com.au)



### Planning concerns

Just read your first edition this year, good to see a real printed paper still out in the community.

I'd like to provide input planning issues we have had at San Remo over the years.

Many issues have been acknowledged by Council and state government but in reality little has progressed except subdivisions and expanding the size of the town probably at least five times the size it was when we first bought here 22 years ago.

I've been to many community meetings to discuss expanding the town area and road expansions.

In more recent times we had the problems of the original Keam Estate subdivision that the San Remo community successfully took to VCAT.

Then the revised plan that was supposed to follow the VCAT decision, but which both the developer and Bass Council have ignored and I'm sure one day will end up in court.

Then there's the insurance claims to be lodged for damage to properties caused by water from Panorama Estate, not only in Genista Street but other areas through to Backbeach Road.

Water only knows one way to travel towards the bay and this estate has water from infrastructure they've built.

Having lived here for a number of years as our main home or holiday home area and originally camping on our block, it's somewhere we will always remember fondly.

Chris Day, San Remo

### Groundhog Day on bin stupidity

Albert Einstein said: "Insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results." He may have been predicting the actions of the Bass Coast

Shire.

For five years, ratepayers have paid the price for a poor waste collection program.

Paid through bins being left on the streets, spoiling our amenity. Paid through rubbish overflowing from these bins, littering our streets. And paid, literally with our money, to support a system that simply does not work.

Every year residents who dare to complain have been arrogantly lectured about why it is the right system, and why education is the key. I have personally been told by three mayors that it was the fault of the community, and not the system.

Well, here we are in year five, and council is channelling Einstein, by doing the same thing, and expecting a different result.

But at least they are consistent.

The blame is squarely placed on residents and tenants. No blame is taken by the architects of a system that has never worked.

That would require self-reflection, and a self-awareness our mayors and senior officers do not possess.

Paul Zennaro, Ventnor

### Ugly, costly, useless

Our forefathers, all those years ago, installed a series of ugly groynes on our iconic north facing beach east of Cowes, in the quite mistaken belief the sands would be swept away without them.

We had somehow learned to live with them, and dodge around or over them at higher tides, and gaze upon them, and the other beaches without them, and ponder on their ugliness, and the complete ineffectiveness of them against Mother Nature.

So, come back any time after days, months, years, or decades, and it can be seen that Mother Nature, she doth puteth, and doth taketh away the sands at her whim.

I use Biblical terminology, because the sands have been here since before Biblical times, and will surely be here for thousands of years to come.

The "green" driven ideology of erecting ugly groynes on our once beautiful beach, will not deter Mother Nature in her relentless puteth and taketh strategy.

On my walk on December 27, each of the ugly newly constructed groynes has a gap of 25 cm or so underneath, indicating millions of tonnes of sand has recently been taketh by Mother Nature and puteth somewhere else more deserving, possibly this time to the "groyneless" Cowes main beach, which has received a large dump of sand, just in time to present a lovely beach for holiday makers to enjoy!

I can see some merit in installing rock walls, or groyne like wooden structures parallel to the high tide line, to avoid landowners losing part of their land to erosion, even though it is quite obvious that eroded banks shown by the sand there, and various old things uncovered, that this has all happened before.

We are watching Mother Nature in her relentless puteth and taketh pursuits!

Is it just me, or does anyone else, particularly in the Lovers Walk, Stradbroke Avenue, Silverleaves areas, deplore the ugly, costly, useless, desecration of our once beautiful, north facing East Cowes beaches?

Graeme Endacott, Healesville

### German Pointer needs good home

I am and always will be a lover of dogs, great and small. In my opinion, regardless of the on-lease/off-lease debate, if an owner can control their dog off-lease I have no concerns.

Disappointingly, over the past months I have witnessed a

thoughtless attitude, disregard for our environment and wildlife and the laws in place to protect both, that continues to confound me. I had not previously encountered this person on my daily walks so possibly a new resident to the Island or new to dog ownership.

The dog is a large brown/white German Pointer which is allowed to run off lead (in designated on-lead areas) out of control and displaying the prey/hunting characteristics that this breed of dog is known for, within the bushed area. Not to mention relieving itself on the beach without a thought from its owner to pick up the waste. From conversations with other local residents, this particular dog and owner are known for these reasons within the Red Rocks area.

This morning I again had to witness this woman's disregard for our Island. Her dog was, as usual off lead and 'hunting' through the roped off Hooded Plover area. I called out to her regarding gaining control of her dog, however either through negligence or an inability to control her animal failed to do anything to rectify the situation. Her reply to me was, "at least I'm recognised". What!?

A visitor to the Island was playing with his young child nearby and witnessing our encounter. He said he was glad someone attempted to rectify the situation as he too was concerned about the plovers just up from where they were sitting (he pointed them out to me). Who knows the real outcome for others?

With all the exceptional work the rangers and volunteers do to protect our endangered species and all wildlife in general, I am astounded that a visitor to our Island has more respect for our way of life than this person who, I assume, lives here.

Name and address supplied



Several anglers were given warnings and four received infringement notices relating to fishing in the intertidal zone, undersize catch and abalone offences.

## Anglers targeted for illegal catch

There has been an increase in people dobbling in dodgy fishing practices on Western Port over the summer holidays, according to the Victorian Fisheries Authority.

A VFA spokesperson told the Advertiser a large number of calls were made to 13FISH – the hotline to report illegal or suspected illegal fishing – with 110 inspections carried out by fisheries officers on the bay. “During the Christmas and New

Year holiday period, officers from Cowes patrolled the Western Port area, which experiences high visitation rates,” the spokesperson said.

“Several people were given warnings and four received infringement notices relating to fishing in the intertidal zone, undersize catch and abalone offences.”

She said it was vital anglers understood the fishing regulations before heading out.

The Victorian Recreational Fishing Guide outlines regulations relating to where a person can fish, what equipment can be used, catch and size limits.

Details: [www.vfa.vic.gov.au](http://www.vfa.vic.gov.au) and also on the Vic Fishing app.

Anyone who sees or suspects illegal fishing in Victorian waters should call 13FISH (133474).

[vfa.vic.gov.au/enforcement/13fish-intelligence-reporting-line](http://vfa.vic.gov.au/enforcement/13fish-intelligence-reporting-line)

## Phillip Island golf results

Tuesday, January 4 Stableford. Ladies winner Wendy Hopkins (29) with 40 points on countback from Pam Rothfield (24).

Mens: Division one winner Jim Richardson (12) with 38 points, r/up Isaac Batty (+2) with 37 points on c/b to Dan McConnon.

Division Two winner Jason King (17) with 39 Points, r/up John Monk (18) with 38 points on c/b from Bruce Sherwood.

Division Three winner Adam Wagner (28) with 44 points, r/up Paul Hewitt (26) with 40 points on c/b from John Payne.

Nine hole competition winner

Patrick Owens (25) with 24 points on countback from Chris Hailes (32) with 19 points.

Thursday, January 6 Open Par. Division one winner Dan McConnon (6) with +3, r/up Ron Young (12) with +2 on c/back from Ray Reid.

Division two winner Tony Zoa-netti (21) with +2 on c/back to Chris Cannin (33).

Nine Hole stableford competition winner Simon Furniss (21) with 21 points on c/b to Mal MacArthur (27).

Saturday, January 8 Mens Monthly Medal Stroke

Mens: A Grade winner Chris Reynolds (7) with 71 nett, r/up was Lucas

Piera (1) with 73 Nett c/back.

B Grade winner Lawrie Downward (16) with 70 Nett, r/up John Wiseman (17) with 72 Nett.

C Grade Winner Art Lyons (24) with 68 nett, r/up John Payne (26) with 71 Nett.

Monthly Medal winner Art Lyons.

NTP: 5th Brent White, 7th Phil Dressing, 10th Jason King, 17th Alan Sherlock.

The Ladies played Stableford and the winner was Trish Jamieson (41) with 41 Points from Karen Green (12) with 35 points on countback.

NTP: 5th Ira Septiana, 7th Zoe Frost, 10th Rhonda Boyd, 17th Debra Orr.

Nine hole competition winner was Bruce Smith.

## South West Gippsland Midweek Bowls Group

Winners: John Nicholson, Bev Elliott, Pauline McWilliams and Lindsay Russell (retired hurt).

Runners up: Peter McWilliams, Phil Wright and Mike Saunders.

Thursday, January 6 midweek bowls was played at San Remo with 26 happy bowlers glad to get back into the bowling scene.

The day started off cool and pleas-

ant as the day progressed the weather became quite unbearably hot more so the humidity. We did not finish the second game as everyone was exhausted from the heat.

Nevertheless good scores were recorded: winning score 28 points, runners up 27 points.

There was no one game winners because of the early finish.

Cold drinks were definitely the order of the day and the bar did very well. Thank you to Peter Thorley, who always serves us with a smile also to Gwen Jeffrey and Elaine Williams for attending to kitchen duties.

Without our volunteers we would

not have a midweek bowls group.

A big thank you to the members who brought items for the free raffle table. The RCH tin did very well with many falling on their sword and donating.

Our member Lindsay had a nasty fall and ended up in hospital – we wish him well.

Next week we will be at Tarwin Lower – 10am at the club for a 10.30am start, two games of 12 ends. BYO lunch and uniforms.

For more information or to register please call Peter McWilliams on 5678 5974 the night before. Everyone welcome.

See you on the green.

## Cape Paterson Aquathon cancelled

Organisers have announced the Cape Paterson Aquathon, scheduled for January 16, has been cancelled.

They said the decision was made “in the interests of public safety while the pandemic is at its peak”, and because there were challenges finding enough available personnel for water safety duties as well as volunteers who act as road marshalls.

The organisers of the Cowes and

San Remo events are hoping to press ahead but will be monitoring the situation.

The Little Penguin Dash in Cowes is currently scheduled for February 5 at 10.30am, with the Cowes Classic at 2.15pm.

The San Remo Channel Challenge is scheduled for February 19 at 3.15pm.

Online registrations and information at [www.basscoastseries.com.au](http://www.basscoastseries.com.au)

## Phillip Island bowls results

15 End 2 Bowl competition:

Winner Marilyn Forrest and Runner Up Sandra Read.

Ladies 21 up competition:

Lynne Thomas def Trish Williams. Lyn Rogerson def Gwenda Arnold. Monika Poole def Glenda Grazules. Karen Cashen def Merilyn King. Marilyn Forrest def Jan Dixon. Pam Cameron def Julia Pora. Jan Stubbs def Inga Royce.

Well done ladies

Champion of Champions was held at Wonthaggi with Darryl Major going through to the Men's final Sunday afternoon but was defeated by W. Parks from Inverloch 14-25.

Sandra Read for the ladies going down only just on Saturday to R.Scott from Meenyan in a fabulous fight back by 2 shots 23-25.

Socials on Thursday saw 24 play-

ers take to the green in hot humid cloudy conditions with visitors from Moonee Ponds, Mulgrave, Garfield and Cheltenham joining us.

Winners for the day were Ash Alibone, Monica Poole, Lynne Thomas and Steve Bellino with 2 wins and a +31 and runners up were John King-sley, Lyn Rogerson, Jools Dusting and Adrian Goldsmith with 2 wins and a +21.

Midweek Pennant starts back this week ... good luck all and there is also a Mens Pairs Match on Wednesday morning and some more of the ladies 21 up.

Check the board outside and check the inside board for upcoming events and get your names down.

Legacy 4's and Australia Day medley on the 26th.

Have a good week all and good bowling.



Our Champion of Champions players Darryl Major and Sandra Read.



15 End 2 Bowl Singles, Sandra Read and Marilyn Forrest.



Social Day winners (left to right): Ash Alibone, Steve Bellino, Lynne Thomas and Monica Poole.



Winners Pauline McWilliams (2), John Nicholson (S), Bev Elliott (3) and Lindsay Russell (L) not pictured.

## San Remo Bowls Club



Runners Up: Peter McWilliams (S), Mike Saunders (L), Phil Wright (3).

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Enquiries contact:  
**Junior Football Operation Manager, Brendan Cashman**  
0455 077 843



# TIDE GUIDE

Tidal predictions for Stony Point, Cowes -0.09 Newhaven -0.31 | HIGH TIDE IS MARKED IN BLACK

WED 12 JAN	THU 13 JAN	FRI 14 JAN	SAT 15 JAN	SUN 16 JAN	MON 17 JAN	TUE 18 JAN
LOW 2:04 am 0.98 m	LOW 2:49 am 1.13 m	LOW 3:39 am 1.26 m	LOW 4:36 am 1.36 m	HIGH 12:16 am 2.56 m	HIGH 1:13 am 2.63 m	HIGH 2:07 am 2.72 m
HIGH 8:28 am 2.67 m	HIGH 9:01 am 2.54 m	HIGH 9:40 am 2.43 m	HIGH 10:26 am 2.33 m	LOW 5:39 am 1.41 m	LOW 6:44 am 1.41 m	LOW 7:45 am 1.35 m
LOW 2:32 pm 0.60 m	LOW 3:13 pm 0.63 m	LOW 3:58 pm 0.67 m	LOW 4:48 pm 0.71 m	HIGH 11:22 am 2.26 m	HIGH 12:26 pm 2.25 m	HIGH 1:29 pm 2.29 m
HIGH 9:30 pm 2.53 m	HIGH 10:23 pm 2.51 m	HIGH 11:18 pm 2.52 m		LOW 5:45 pm 0.72 m	LOW 6:43 pm 0.69 m	LOW 7:37 pm 0.65 m

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ABC TV's Back Roads program – renowned for travelling Australia to interview quirky and colourful townsfolk – visited French Island in December to film local residents, including the barge operator, general store owner and former tour owner Lois Aires, as well as manager of the French Island Vineyard Matt Spark.

# C'est la vie on French Island

French Island once hid in plain sight.

Slap bang in the middle of Western Port, for years the island – much larger than neighbouring Phillip Island – was a largely undiscovered, hidden gem.

But since the pandemic there has been an upswing in interest, thanks largely to its remote lifestyle, yet close proximity.

French Island's only real estate agent has reported that in an average year, properties take 12 months to sell, but during the pandemic they have been snapped up in a week.

Now ABC TV's Back Roads program – renowned for travelling Australia to interview quirky and colourful townsfolk – has discovered French Island, late last year visiting to film local residents, including the barge operator, general store owner and former tour owner Lois Aires.

Long-time local Matt Spark says he was interviewed by guest host Lisa Millar – better known for hosting ABC News Breakfast – about his dual role as manager of the French Island Vineyard and captain of the cricket club.

"Anyone who was a colourful character or had a story had a microphone put in front of them," Matt jokes.

"We spent a couple of hours around the grapevines and Lisa planted a couple of vines, and then we filmed a game at the cricket club."

Is he worried the attention will detract from the island's relative isolation?

"Generally, the population here is about 100 but on weekends lately there can be up to 300 people.



Matt Spark is the captain of the French Island Cricket Club, which is 121 years old. This match was filmed for Back Roads earlier this month.

"But we still have no bridge. If people are brave enough to come over then I'm happy to promote French Island."

## Cricket club

Matt says not only has he been interviewed by Back Roads about the French Island cricket club, but other media has also been fascinated by the club's history.

The club is 121 years old and has played continuously except for a break during the world wars.

He says because of the island's small population, it is always a struggle to get 11 players for the team.

"About four years ago we were almost at the point we would have to fold because we couldn't get enough players.

"So we did a recruitment drive on the mainland, through news-

papers and friends of locals, and got enough members to keep the club going."

There are now about four players who live on the island.

The club plays in the Mornington Peninsula Cricket Association in the A1 grade, which has eight teams in the south Frankston area.

"We won our game when Back Roads filmed. We've won all three games so far this year so we're doing well."

While Matt is the captain, his mum Dianne has been the club secretary for 40 years and a scorer for 50 years, while his father is treasurer and uncle the president.

"I have played for the club my whole life, since I was 12, so 22 years. I've only missed three games in that time, twice because I was in a wedding and once I was

on holidays."

## Lifestyle

Matt says he grew up on his parents' cattle farm and it was an idyllic childhood, with the island off-grid and residents pay no rates.

"As much as it's isolated there are always people around and as a kid I had a huge amount of freedom and independence.

"People often think we're backwards – they'll ask us if we have WiFi or phone reception and yes we do."

Matt attended the island's only school, Perseverance Primary.

"At one stage it got down to just three kids at the school; me, my sister and one other pupil. At its highest I reckon it has been about 15 students."

Like all children growing up on the island, he then attended secondary school on the Mornington Peninsula, catching the ferry each day to Westernport Secondary College at Hastings.

For 15 years the father of two has been the manager at the vineyard and seven years ago moved off the island to live on the peninsula at Bittern, to be closer to his partner's work and his children's school.

"I now commute to the island by boat every day, catching a lift with a contractor who lives at Crib Point and does the road maintenance on the island, or I catch the ferry.

"At times I miss living here, but I'm still here a lot, at least eight hours a day.

"In March my partner and I are actually getting married at the vineyard, after cancelling it twice because of Covid."

**ALEX SCOTT  
AND STAFF**

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