

PHILLIP ISLAND & SAN REMO ADVERTISER

Your Community Voice!

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 13, 2021

\$1.40 Incl. GST



Summer fun in the sun

Locals and visitors alike were out enjoying the sunshine over the weekend, with crowds flocking to beaches, cafes and bars across the island. The Wain family from Ventnor made the most of the wonderful weather with a day at the Cowes Yacht Club beach with their visitors, the Robinson's from Ringwood. There were smiles, sand and wetsuits all round. Back row: Hugh Wain, Pax Robinson, Max Wain and Taj Robinson. Front: Ivy Robinson and Isla Wain.

Hopes dashed for road upgrade

Residents of Shetland Heights Road have had their hopes for a road upgrade as part of the development of the Junior Secondary Campus in San Remo dashed.

When the state government announced in August 2019 that San Remo would be the site of the new campus, both residents and council expressed hope this would result in a significant contribution from the government towards the cost of sealing the road.

A spokesperson for Bass Coast Shire Council said the unsealed

sections of Potters Hill and Shetland Heights roads were rural type roads and "unsuitable for the likely increase in vehicular and pedestrian traffic generated by the new school."

"We have been working with the Victorian School Building Authority's Engineering Consultant to achieve the best infrastructure outcomes in support of the new school site."

However the government and Bass Coast Shire Council have now confirmed the project will not in-

clude an upgrade for the busy road.

"The Victorian School Building Authority has advised that sealing Shetland Heights Road is not part of the works proposed for the school," a council spokesperson said.

Member for Bass, Jordan Crugnale confirmed the government would only upgrade Potters Hill Road.

"All proposed works to Shetland Heights Road rest with Bass Coast Shire Council as identified in their San Remo Strategy adopted in August 2013," Ms Crugnale said.

"Whilst Shetland Heights is not within the school building scope, all responsible agencies will work together to ensure the movement of traffic and pedestrians is safe and well planned."

Ongoing campaign

When the site of the new campus was announced in December 2020, Fritzie Barrowcliffe, a spokesperson for the residents said she was concerned the government would "do the bare minimum and complete Potters Hill Road only".

"If that is the case, it is a total outrage and we will fight it tooth and nail," she said at the time.

It appears the residents' worst fears have come true.

Fritzie said neither the council nor government had officially notified the group that Shetland Heights Road would not be sealed as part of the campus development.

She said residents will continue to lobby all levels of government, as it was "unacceptable" not to upgrade the road.

Continued page 12

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14 27	15 21	14 21	13 20	14 22	14 17	14 16

Parking “nightmares” come true

In December Cowes west residents predicted a summer of car parking “nightmares” after councillors voted in support of an upgrade to the Phillip Island Beachfront Holiday Park.

Resident Rhonda Barnett, said residents are living the nightmare, with parking issues as bad as ever.

“When council approved the proposal, they promised a great monitoring of parking, but we haven’t seen them at all these holidays.

“They said they’d be doing regular patrols, but no one has sighted them.

“We were told not to worry ... it would be fully monitored. Well, lesson learned,” she said.

“Last week, there were two rows of cars parked along the nature strip.”

Rhonda said she rang the council last week about the issue but hasn’t had a response.

She said she also went to the office at the Holiday Park to complain about cars parking across driveways and on the nature strips and was told “it’s not our problem, we don’t care”.

“I was hoping because it was now the NRMA, there may be more community liaison. I thought they would talk to people and try and work with you, but no,” Rhonda said.

An NRMA spokesperson told the Advertiser, “NRMA Parks and Resorts is continually working with Bass Coast Shire Council and the local community to ensure Phillip Island remains a great place to live, work and holiday”.

“Any street parking outside the holiday park is monitored by council and not regulated by holiday park staff,” the spokesperson said.

“Locals and holiday makers legally use street parking to access the nearby beach.

“Any drivers who park illegally, such as across driveways, risk being fined by council rangers. Holiday park staff also regularly remind guests to be considerate of local residents and the wider community.”

Patrols

When the permit for an upgrade to the Holiday Park was approved at the December meeting, Bass Coast Shire councillors promised there would be increased patrols of the park by by-laws officers and police.

At the time, Rhona Barnett said she had no faith in the promise, however a spokesperson for Bass Coast Shire Council said extra patrols had been undertaken.

“We have been carrying out additional patrols in the streets surrounding the Cowes Caravan Park this summer.

“A total of 13 parking infringement notices have been issued along Kedah Road and Church Street, between McKenzie Road and



Residents living around the Phillip Island Beachfront Holiday Park say last summer’s parking nightmares have been repeated, despite council promising to monitor the area and increase patrols.

McHaffie Drive, between December 21 and now, including three on January 8.”

Proposed upgrade

The \$900,000 upgrade to the Phillip Island Beachfront Holiday Park at 164 Church Street, was approved by Council at the December meeting, although councillors did not support the proposed construction of four glamping buildings on the foreshore.

They also voted to move a swimming pool and jumping pillow to a quieter area after resident noise concerns.

The development – which received 22 objections – will remove up to 20 significant, healthy natives and includes 12 new ensuites and studio units – taking the total number of sites to 270 – but adding just 17 new car parks.

Surrounding residents objected, already critical of insufficient car parking each peak season.

For years, residents surrounding the holiday park at 164 Church Street have complained of tenants and visitors parking on nature strips and over driveways of nearby houses.

In October, the then-management Across Australia Parks and Resorts (AAPR) announced it would take Bass Coast Shire to VCAT, after they said the shire failed to grant a planning permit within the prescribed time.

The VCAT hearing is currently scheduled for May 31 and June 1, 2021.

The NRMA did not respond when asked if the hearing would now be abandoned, in light of council’s approval of the plan at the December 2020 meeting.



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Savage court appearance adjourned

Committal mentions for Joshua and Taylor Savage scheduled for January 7 at the Latrobe Valley Magistrates Court were adjourned until March 4.

A committal mention is a preliminary hearing before a full committal hearing. At a committal mention, the magistrate determines whether any or all of the charges can be heard and finalised in the Magistrates’ Court, or may order the accused to be committed to trial at the County Court or Supreme Court.

The Savage brothers are charged with stealing \$650,000 in 19 separate robberies across Phillip Island and South Gippsland. In August 2019, the men were remanded in custody, with the judge describing them as an unacceptable risk to the community. They successfully appealed for bail to the Supreme

Court in September and were granted bail subject to a series of conditions, including not travelling to Bass Coast or South Gippsland unless permitted by police.



POLICE BRIEFS

Police from San Remo were called to a fire at the Anderson Lookout in Clifford Road around 4.30pm on Sunday.

The small grass fire, started by a cigarette, was quickly contained.

A 36-year-old man from Cape Woolamai is assisting police with enquiries.

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Outdoor furniture is covered in dust, and Andrew said the dirt displayed here is from just one day of summer traffic.



The Esplanade in Sunderland Bay has been engulfed in dust since the dust suppressant on local roads was ripped up five years ago, says resident Andrew Gott.

Dust suppressant removal is a shire-wide policy

Bass Coast Shire Council has previously advised that all dust suppressant seals across the shire are being removed.

"The application of dust suppressant seals were undertaken as a trial in Bass Coast between 2005 and 2007. These seals were designed to be low cost and temporary," General Manager James Stirton told the Advertiser in February 2020.

Analysis of the trial in 2010 showed the seal was not sustainable over the long-term, Mr Stirton said, and in 2013 Council adopted a strategy to manage the situation.

That strategy was to rip up the seals when roads reached "intervention level" and replace them with crushed rock.

"The works to remove the dust suppressant seal have been conducted in accordance with the management strategy," Mr Stirton said.

"There was analysis undertaken at the time of the review which indicated costs to maintain the Primer Seal Dust Suppressant roads to be approximately six times that of an unsealed road."

Sunderland Bay a dust bowl

Sunderland Bay has been engulfed in dust since Bass Coast Shire Council ripped up the dust suppressant on local roads five years ago.

Andrew Gott said he can't open the windows in his home on The Esplanade because of the dust, which also coats his car and covers furniture and floors indoors and out.

"When we purchased our home in 2006 the road had a light asphalt seal, which acted as a dust suppressant. This worked extremely well for approximately six years and then started to break up due to not enough camber on the crown of the road and a lack of drainage," Andrew said.

"The council in its wisdom decided in 2015 to rip out the asphalt and lay a dirt road with no dust suppression. Subsequently for five plus years now we are living in a dust bowl."

He said the floors in his house are scratched from the abrasive dust which "gets through any crack" and the paintwork on his car is also damaged.

Then there's the health risk. "Children are walking down the

street coughing and inhaling dust. What damage will this do to their lungs in later years?"

Holiday traffic

The busy holiday season exacerbates the issue, with cars travelling along the Esplanade to the car park at Barry Street.

"It's used as a highway for cars to view the surf and also residents use it as a thoroughfare to Elane, Barry and Foam streets.

"Because we're facing south, the wind blows the dust across into our house. It's got to the stage where it is just ridiculous."

With more than four decades of experience in the construction industry, Andrew is at a loss to understand why council won't reinstate the dust suppressant.

He's calculated it would cost under \$25,000 to apply dust suppressant to the 2500 square metres of road.

"This is based on council's numbers, it's not something I'm inventing," he said. "The last seal got five to six years

out of it and worked really, really well.

"Because the road is flat (or has no camber), the water doesn't run off, which is why there's holes. But to get five or six years with no maintenance, that's good value."

He estimated it is currently costing council approximately \$48,000 a year to maintain the road.

"The council grades the roads from time to time, which costs a minimum of \$500 per hour.

"They use a grader water truck, a truck with gravel and two men with shovels filling depressions by hand.

"That's approximately \$4000 per day, 12 times a year.

"Even if the road had to be sealed every five years, it would be a considerable saving, plus the savings in health, which you cannot put a price on."

He believes with the high rates residents pay they deserve more.

"Normally you pay high costs for a service. We pay high costs to be choked with hazardous dust!

"If this was a construction site, Workcover and the EPA would close the site

and issue fines on the contractors."

Council "not interested"

Andrew said he and other residents have repeatedly contacted council about the dust but "they're not interested" in dealing with the issue.

"I've spoken to them about dust suppression and the kind of products out there that are used by other shires."

He's even gone as far as purchasing a dust suppressant called Rainstorm and applying it to the road out the front of his house.

"I tried it in front of my block and it does stop the dust, but I can't do the whole street.

"If a car comes down, all this dust is swirling across, but as soon as it

comes to the Rainstorm patch, it stops - there's no dust coming off the tyres.

"But the cars are dragging dust down from everywhere else.

"I've invited the council down to my house to see for themselves. They can come and sit in my house, have a coffee and watch and see what we're going through. But they're not interested."



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Where's the soap?

The thousands of beachgoers who flocked to the Cowes front beaches over the weekend to enjoy the surf and sun, found the toilets at the end of Thompson Avenue and under the amphitheatre opposite North Pier to be completely out of soap by lunchtime.

Patrons were angry on Saturday that basic COVID precautions are not in place at the public toilets at the busiest beach on Phillip Island, and that they were unable to soap their hands or apply sanitiser after using the facility.

The two small soap dispensers mounted over the basins in each of the toilets proved to be completely inadequate for the demand of a busy hot summer Saturday ... and the queues lining up to use them were most unimpressed.

With state government funding flying into council coffers to cater for COVID safe requirements, beach goers were highly critical that the basics of soap and sanitiser were not available in such a high-profile public area.

The universal message for everyone to wash their hands with soap or sanitiser weighed heavily, as it was impossible for visitors to the area to do so in this instance.

Why sanitiser stations have not been provided and why such small soap dispensers are installed at a facility which serves large numbers of people is a question the Advertiser put to Bass Coast Shire Council.

"Soap dispensers were installed in all of the toilet blocks we manage (57, some with more than one dispenser) in mid-2020," a council spokesperson said.

"The issue has been the number of visitors we currently have and the size of the units available.

"Our team fills soap dispensers a minimum of once a day, however, due to the sheer volume of usage, they can be empty again within a couple of hours."

Some of the smaller units in high use



Two tiny soap dispensers in each of the public toilets situated along the Cowes Esplanade are completely inadequate for the large numbers of visitors to our front beaches at this time of year, pandemic or not. The dispensers were empty at noon on Saturday, and no sanitiser stations have been installed.

sites will now be replaced with larger dispensers, the spokesperson said.

"We are also running peak season cleans at the moment, so the dispensers are filled twice daily on our high use facilities such as in Cowes.

"When events are on, such as markets in the Jetty Triangle, we schedule cleans every two hours, which includes re-filling of soap dispensers.

"Due to issues with vandalism, sanitiser stations have not been installed in our toilet blocks, however they have been installed in all of our new outdoor dining areas, as well as in some facilities that are managed by Section 86 Committees, such as halls.

"In addition to this, we would encourage everyone to carry hand sanitiser with them if possible."

Sunderland special charge scheme?

Bass Coast Shire Council said Surf Beach and Sunderland Bay are next in line in its Urban Roads and Drainage Improvement Policy Priority Program.

A spokesperson for the council said it was aware of some residents' concerns about the unsealed roads.

"Council has allocated funds in the 2020/21 financial year to start the engagement process with the Surf Beach and Sunderland Bay community and key stakeholders.

"The Surf Beach Sunderland Bay project area contains more than 1000 properties and represents potentially the biggest ever improvement project undertaken by Bass Coast Shire to date."

The spokesperson said investigation and detailed community consultation with the residents will start this year.

Resident Andrew Gott has repeatedly raised his concerns about dust in the area with the council (see separate story), but said no one had spoken to him about a special charge scheme to seal the roads.

He feels it's unlikely Sunderland Bay would be able to get the required percentage of residents to agree to a special charge scheme.

Western Port Ward councillor Bruce Kent agrees.

"I've been doing my own asking around of residents, and to get to that first base you have to have 65 per cent or higher wanting to take the next step.

"I'm getting around 50/50. Some are happy to just have the stormwater upgraded. Some holiday homeowners

are happy to put up with the dust five weeks a year."

The Advertiser asked Council if the special charge scheme could proceed if one of the estates decided not to participate, but did not receive a response.

Andrew doesn't believe fully made roads and footpaths are necessary. In a perfect world, he'd like to see the roads returned to the state they were in when he bought his house in 2006, when the roads were treated with a dust suppressant seal.

"The majority of people I'm speaking to are in the same boat."

Residents of the estate have lived with dusty roads since 2015, when the dust suppressant seals were ripped up and replaced with gravel roads.

Even if a special charge scheme did manage to get the go ahead, it's likely to be at least four years before Sunderland Bay had sealed roads.

"That's a long time to wait if you're choking in dust. And we've had five years of it now."

Cr Kent said with the special charge scheme process about to start, it's unlikely the council will agree to any interim dust suppressant measures.

"There are scientific reasons why dust suppressant isn't put down.

"Dust suppressants attract moisture, it pulls the water down into the road, so if it's wet, the road could be a quagmire.

"If you're looking at developing a road (through a special charge scheme), you don't want to put dust suppression down."

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Low blow for school market

Signs advertising a community market set up to help raise funds for the Newhaven Primary School were stolen on the weekend.

The five signs were put up around Newhaven and San Remo on Thursday afternoon around 5.30pm, in preparation for the Saturday market, but when market organiser Felicity Ashman arrived to set up at 4.30am on Saturday morning, all the signs were gone.

She said the signs were still in place at 11pm on Friday night, but were removed in the early hours of Saturday morning.

"It's pretty nasty, given that we are trying to build a community market to benefit the school," said Felicity, who described it as an orchestrated attack.

"We think it's pretty low."

Although the market is run by Urban Market, a private company, a percentage of the money goes to the school.

Leading Senior Constable Julian Wildenberg from San Remo police said the theft was being investigated and police were checking CCTV footage from neighbouring businesses.

"There were five signs at five separate locations, so if anyone in the community saw or knows something, please contact us."

It was only the second market that had been held on the school grounds, as part of a new fundraising approach.

Jennifer Carroll from the Newhaven Primary School fundraising committee was shocked to learn the signs had been removed.

"I'm not sure what kind of person would do such a thing, particularly since these markets are all about raising money for our school."

Both Felicity and Jennifer have been moved by the support from the community.



"It's pretty low," said market organiser Felicity Ashman, after five signs advertising the market at Newhaven Primary School were stolen on Friday night. The police are calling for anyone with information to contact them.

"Print It Fast in San Remo has generously offered to assist us in replacing the signs, which is wonderful, given the circumstances," said Jennifer.

Felicity said if the aim was to stop the market from succeeding, taking the signs had the opposite effect.

"All it has done is galvanise the local support for us," she said.

"We've had fantastic support from local community and about 3000 people attended on Saturday."

Market goes on

The Newhaven Primary School

market will run every Saturday in January at Newhaven Primary School (12-22 School Avenue), from 9am until 2pm.

From February it will run on the first Saturday of every month.

Felicity said this week's market is expected to be bigger than ever.

"Last week we had 38 stallholders and we expect around 40-45 stallholders this week."

"It's a good, open market, with a bit of everything. We have eggs, honey, a few farmers market stalls, a sushi van, dumplings, coffee and snacks."

"There's everything from jewellery and candles through to garden tools and ladies' fashion."

She said there was a growing number of local stalls taking part as well.

"If you're interested in having a stall, let me know. We'd love to have more."

Look for the signs

The five missing signs were placed at separate locations.

- Nature Strip outside the Post Office in San Remo between the main road and car park.

- Just before Forrest Road, on the left-hand side as you come over the bridge.

- Nature strip outside Westernport Water

- Intersection of Cleeland Street and Boys Home Road

- Forrest Avenue and Cleeland Street intersection.

There were two 1200 x 900mm signs and three 900 x 600mm signs. Five 10kg weight bags holding the signs in place were also taken.

Felicity said if anyone knew where the signs were, they could return them to the school grounds.

Police are asking anyone with information to contact the San Remo police on 5678 5500, call Crimestoppers on 1800 333 000 or go to Crimestoppers.com.au.



Three boys had a close call at the Colonnades on the weekend, after being swept out by currents. The unpatrolled beach is notorious for rips and currents and is considered dangerous for swimming.

Close call at Colonnades

Three young swimmers had a lucky escape after being swept out by currents at The Colonnades on Sunday.

One of the boys' fathers swam out and with the help of three local surfers, managed to bring them all back to safety.

Leading Senior Constable Julian Wildenberg from San Remo police, said it was a good reminder to only swim at patrolled beaches.

"The Colonnades is not a safe swimming beach," he stressed.

"Fortunately the father was a triathlete, so he was able to reach the boys. A helicopter was sent to assist, but it wasn't required."

The three boys were examined by paramedics at the scene, then cleared

to go home with their families.

LS Constable Wildenberg thanked the local surfers for coming to the aid of the boys.

"The identity of one of the surfers is known to us, but the other two had left the beach by the time police arrived."

"We'd like them to contact San Remo police, so we can thank them," he said.

The incident is a stark reminder of the dangerous rips and currents on the beaches at Cape Woolamai.

On Christmas Eve in 2018 a father and son drowned at the same location.

Life Saving Victoria reminds everyone to always swim at a patrolled beach, and to visit beachsafe.org.au and download the beachsafe app.

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Don't get Covid complacent

Residents and visitors are being warned not to get Covid complacent, as people enjoy the sunshine and holidays.

Bass Coast Health CEO Jan Child said it was important to maintain a heightened awareness of the risks.

"The virus is still active and still out there," she said.

"It was always very contagious and it's even more so now."

She said she hoped the last couple of weeks had reminded everyone there is a "new normal" and people needed to remain vigilant.

"Any one of us can be exposed."

She reinforced the importance of social distancing, wearing masks, frequent handwashing and using hand sanitisers.

"These are basic and easy safety principles," Ms Child said.

"This is our new Covid world and it's going to take months and months to get to a point where people don't need to think about these things all the time."

Even with the vaccine, she predicts "Covid won't be gone this year".

Ms Child warned against individuals and businesses becoming complacent and said businesses need to stay focused and ensure their Covid safety plans were in place.

The re-emergence of the virus in Victoria held some important lessons.

"The takeaway from the last couple of weeks is, although some of the businesses that were exposed had done all the right things, they still had to manage some repercussions."

"But they did minimise the extent of the exposure and did help keep the community safe."

But she said people needed to take personal responsibility for their own safety and realise there is a po-

tential risk everywhere you go.

"You need to do everything you can to protect yourself and your family."

For those who believe the situation is no longer serious, she has a clear message.

"You need to think about the most vulnerable person in your life and let's talk through what it would mean for those people in your life if you got it."

Local testing

When venues in Wonthaggi and Leongatha were listed as public exposure sites, local residents and visitors responded to the call to come forward for testing.

"We had huge numbers coming through for testing," Ms Child said.

"A huge shout out to all of those who did."

Bass Coast Health tested over 800 people on the first two days of January at Wonthaggi and the Urgent Care Centre.

In the first seven days of the year, 471 tests were carried out in Cowes, with the peak of 107 tests recorded on January 2.

Ms Child urged people to keep an eye on exposure sites on the DHHS website and get tested if needed.

Wear a mask

Ms Child said it was frustrating to see people refusing to wear masks or wearing them incorrectly.

"We can control how safe we are by being strict on these things. If you're in an indoor public space, you should be wearing a mask."

"Those exposure sites from DHHS shows you what a risk this virus is. It's a good reminder that if you're in those spaces where you can't distance, and you can't be sure everyone else is doing the right thing, you need to arm yourself."

Although it is not mandated, she

recommended wearing a mask outdoors in busy streets.

Business safety

Ms Child said BCH had received calls from people concerned about the lack of Covid-safe practises in some businesses.

But equally, other venues had been put forward as great examples of Covid-safe venues.

Covid-safe examples for businesses included QR codes on tables (Services Victoria app for contact tracing), having Covid-safe rules clearly displayed and hand sanitiser available. Offering free masks to customers, staff all wearing masks correctly, ensuring tables were all distanced, social distancing managed in any queues and online bookings were all ways to increase customer safety.

"Some businesses have set up staff with screens, with sanitisers and have done it extremely well," said Ms Child.

"They really managed the patrons in their businesses – so a huge congrats to them for showing true leadership in some of this behaviour change."

Although she believed most businesses were doing a good job with Covid restrictions, she said people also needed to stay aware of the risks and follow the basic safety principles.

"Because we're a holiday destination, there are people from all over Victoria coming here more than ever before."

"They're coming for nice fresh air on Phillip Island and they can forget Covid."

"We need to remind everyone they've got to bring those behaviours with them, wherever they go."

Anyone with even the mildest symptoms is urged to get tested immediately and stay home until they receive their results.



QR codes on tables are just some of the Covid-safe initiatives from local businesses.

Take the test

Everyone in the community is encouraged to get tested for COVID-19 to help contain the spread of the third wave.

You should be tested if you have visited a public exposure site or display even the mildest Covid symptoms including: fever, chills or sweats, cough, sore throat, shortness of breath, runny nose, or loss of sense of smell or taste.

Everyone who is tested is required to self-isolate until test results are received. Waiting times for test results may take 2-3 days.

Cowes:

- Phillip Island Health Hub (24 hours a day). Call 5951 2100. To avoid delays, the quickest time for testing will be before 8am and after 8pm.

Wonthaggi Hospital Drive Thru Clinic:

- 9am – 4pm daily.
- You can also book a test with Wonthaggi Medical Group, Monday to Friday from 1pm – 5pm. Please book online or phone 0492 036 568.
- People should phone their doctor or the Coronavirus hotline on 1800 675 398 if their symptoms get worse.

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Urgent Care Centre “our hidden gem”

The Phillip Island Medical and Health Action Group (PIMHAG) is calling ... yet again ... for an LED directional sign to the Phillip Island Health Hub to be erected on the corner of Thompson Avenue and Church Street in Cowes.

The Health Hub opened in 2018 and a 24/7 Urgent Care Centre followed in 2019.

PIMHAG has unsuccessfully requested both Bass Coast Health and Bass Coast Shire over the ensuing period to erect directional signs to the facility.

“Signage pointing to the Hub and the 24/7 urgent care facility there is long overdue,” said PIMHAG president Peter Paul last week.

“Since the Health Hub opened in Church Street, PIMHAG has lobbied for signage pointing to the Hub and Urgent Care unit. But to no avail.

“We have raised the issue with Bass Coast Health, Bass Coast Shire and the Consultative Group appointed to help plan for the mooted Community Hospital but have had no success so far.

“Surely this should be a no brainer, and we cannot understand why this was not automatically implemented when the Health Hub was first built.”

PIMHAG members recently undertook a survey outside the Coles supermarket.

The results shocked them.

“From the survey results, it appears that about one third of people who said they were permanent residents did not know where to find the Urgent Care Centre on Phillip Island.

“That is despite the fact that it was just down the road from where they were shopping.

“Not only did they not know where the facility is located, they did not know we have an Urgent Care facility that operates 24/7, 365 days a year. And that its services are bulk billed.

“Unsurprisingly, a greater proportion of



PIMHAG members are calling for directional signage to the Health Hub and 24/7 Urgent Care Centre be erected on the Church Street/Thompson Avenue corner as a matter of urgency. The group conducted a survey recently which found that about one third of permanent residents are unaware that a 24/7 365 day a year Urgent Care Centre is located in Cowes, and that it is bulk billed.

tourists did not know either.

“Surely everything that can be in place should be in place for people to find the Urgent Care Centre in an emergency. Such signage is commonplace on highways and in townships across the rest of the state.”

Mr Paul said the Cowes Medical Centre operates weekdays and Saturday mornings during business hours, but is closed over the rest of the weekend and at nights and the ambulance service is of course available and should be called for emergencies.

“But there are many non-life threatening situations when a doctor is still needed and when the Urgent Care Unit could and should be utilized, which is why it was established.”

“PIMHAG urgently calls on Bass Coast Health and the Bass Coast Shire to address this issue. Please liaise with Regional Roads Victoria to get signage installed without further delay.

“Informing visitors that an Urgent Care Centre is located in Cowes should be a priority.

“The old Warley Hospital directional sign was in place over the decades. A sign for the Hub and Urgent Care Centre should be a priority in a busy holiday location such as ours, for the benefit of tourists, as well as our local residents.

“The Urgent Care Centre and Health Hub are truly great assets for Phillip Island. It really should not be a hidden gem.”

Mr Paul said PIMHAG’s concerns were also reflected this week by a community member who contacted them after an incident, suggesting that it would be helpful for stickers to be placed in holiday homes, advising of the existence of 24/7 Urgent Care on Phillip Island.

Stickers could be placed on fridges, and/or distributed via real estate agents and information centres, Mr Paul said.

Disappointing response to rating view says Council

Bass Coast Shire Council said it was disappointed with the lack of meaningful rates reform by the state government following its recent Rating Strategy Review.

The state government released its long awaited final report and its response to the 56 recommendations identified in the Review, on December 21.

Council made a submission to the review and Council’s CEO Ali Wastie was a member of the Municipal Association of Victoria’s taskforce that also made a submission.

Ms Wastie said the current COVID-19 environment reduced the Government’s appetite to reform the current rating system.

“We are disappointed with the lack of action to address the divide in rating capacity between metropolitan and rural and regional councils and hope this is addressed when the rate capping system is reviewed at the end of 2021. I see this as a missed opportunity,” Ms Wastie said.

“The Review also failed to address the inequity faced by declared tourist destinations like Bass Coast, which experience significant visitation and need to build and maintain additional infrastructure and facilities without a financial contribution from the tourists and

day trippers.”

One of the more positive outcomes of the Review was the Government’s acceptance, in full, of the Panel’s recommendation that the Local Government Act 1989 describes rates as a tax for Local Government purposes.

“We are pleased that the Government has supported this recommendation,” Ms Wastie said.

“It clarifies for our communities that rates do not constitute a fee for service and that paying more in rates does not entitle a ratepayer to greater service levels.

“Whilst nobody likes paying taxes, councils only receive around 3.5 cents in every dollar of taxation, yet we are increasingly depended upon to deliver vital community services.

“We know that rates notices attribute to a small amount of taxation paid by a person who is on a moderate income, however, this is not the case for people on low incomes such as pensioners. That is why we have an adopted Financial Hardship Policy that enables eligible people access to rate relief,” Ms Wastie concluded.

For more information on the state government’s Rating Review, visit www.basscoast.vic.gov.au/ratingreview.

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Penguins play it safe with Covid

The Little Penguins have transitioned from delighting visitors online to having admirers back onsite at the Penguin Parade.

The Nature Parks team is also happy to be welcoming visitors on a well-earned summer holiday to its other attractions including the Koala Conservation Reserve, Churchill Island, and Antarctic Journey at the Nobbies, as well as putting on a range of summer events.

Like all Phillip Island businesses, there has been a lot of work behind the scenes to ensure operations and the summer season are Covid-Safe, with safety a number one priority.

The Nature Parks' Critical Incident Team, in place since March, developed and continues to review the complex components of its Covid-Safe Plan to ensure the Nature Parks is meeting and even exceeding government guidelines, and to meet the requirements of each area's unique attributes.

"We worked very closely with DHHS to develop our Covid-Safe Plan, including having a reduced visitor capacity, recording visitors for the purposes of contact tracing, and increased cleaning regimes," said Peta Witting, Phillip Island Nature Parks General Manager of Tourism Operations.

"Whilst some of our areas allow additional capacity as per the guidance, we have activated areas at a lower capacity in order to review guest flow and maintain physical distancing.

"It's a balance – by opening we can continue to contribute to the Island's tourism economy, and carry out our important conservation work – which is our purpose," she said.

"With numbers strictly limited, it's been quieter than usual. Generally, guests have been enjoying the smaller visitor numbers, and have been very well behaved, so we can offer some sort of normality for people who have all had a challenging year."

Peta said the Sunday Summer



New Covid-safe measures at the Nature Parks include this well spaced seating at their Covid-safe Sunday Summer Session.

Sessions at Churchill Island are an example of the Nature Parks' Covid-Safe event where locals and visitors can enjoy a fun day of music, food and wine out in the sunshine within guidelines.

"The first event was held on January 10 and we are delighted with the response and how the event ran.

"We acknowledge the large responsibility of keeping our guests and staff safe at this time – I'm sure every business on Phillip Island is feeling the same way.

"The executive team and managers have been on deck across the sites to assist the team – from the CEO and right across the team – everyone is playing a role in keeping visitors safe.

"The majority of our guests have been fantastic and followed the rules, with only a small minority having to be reminded to wear masks and socially distance.

"It's been a really long year, and it is

lovely to see people walking around with smiles on their faces – that is what we are all about - bringing families together to have a really memorable experience."

The Nature Parks' Covid-Safe Plan has many actions to ensure the safety of staff and visitors. Covid-Safe Summer initiatives include:

- Limited visitor numbers and restricted opening of areas at all sites set in line with our DHHS approved Covid-Safe Plan.
- Restricting opening of areas inside attractions to those where safe enjoyment and cleaning of areas can be maintained.
- Having a meet and greet role at each site to provide advice to visitors to ensure guidelines are met.
- Ensuring all visitors register with the State Government approved QR code system, backed up with a paper-based option, to ensure tracing if required.

• Signage to communicate to visitors that wearing of masks is compulsory indoors and recommending they are also worn outdoors where social distancing is not possible. At the Penguin Parade, regular announcements are made over the PA to remind visitors of safety measures.

• Increased and regular cleaning regimes in line with our Covid-Safe Plan guidelines across all sites throughout the day.

• Increased sanitising stations at all sites, particularly at experiences such as the Antarctic Journey and Churchill Island, which both have many tactile activities.

• All counters have sneeze screens and cleaning kits.

• Maintaining a cashless policy and encouraging online bookings whenever possible.

• Maintaining a Covid-Safe Summer beach plan in conjunction with Bass Coast Shire Council.

Service centre yet to materialise

After four months without a Cowes Customer Service Centre, or an Information Centre, local ratepayers are wondering when the promised facility will appear.

The Cowes Service Centre and Tourist Information Centre were demolished four months ago, when the Cultural Centre went west.

The loss of both facilities has been keenly felt since by some residents and visitors.

Back in November 2020 when the Advertiser queried the lack of forward planning in regard to the replacement of both services, and asked when ratepayers could expect their reinstatement, the following response was issued by council.

"Council is currently considering a number of options for providing customer service in Cowes over the summer period. "We hope to have confirmation in coming weeks and will communicate this as soon as possible."

Fast forward to mid-January 2021 with the summer period well and truly proceeding, there is still no service centre in place.

So the Advertiser put the same question to council again last week.

And got the following upbeat but uninformative reply.

"We are excited to be opening a Customer Service Centre in Cowes again.

"Unfortunately, there has been a slight delay in finalising the move, however we are hoping to release the details to the community shortly."

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Mining V ecotourism: battlelines drawn



COUNCIL BRIEFS

New Bass Coast Shire councillors have sent a clear message to the Victorian Government that tourism and the environment should not be sacrificed for the region's growing sand mining industry.

Councillors at the December meeting moved two motions, arguing sand mining was in conflict with the shire's vegetation policies, as well as the state government's declaration that Bass Coast is a Distinctive Area Landscape and warning not enough was being done to rehabilitate and revegetate mine sites.

With almost 20 different sand mining quarries in Grantville, councillors say growth of quarries means an increasing number of trucks on roads and impacts on local residents.

The council motions come in the wake of Planning Minister Richard Wynne's decision to use his power to call in a planning permit for Dandy Pre-mix quarries.

Dandy Pre-mix – previously given mining approval in 2013 at 1381 Bass Hwy – is seeking to expand their current Grantville sand mine, which has received 73 community objections.

Through the motions, councillors said they will send a message to the Planning Minister that there was considerable community concern about sand mines, including "noise, traffic, community character, environmental degradation and rehabilitation of the area".

The Minister will convene a planning panel to provide advice on the application before he makes a decision, expected to be in March 2021.

If the application is successful, it will approve more native vegetation removal and override an agreement that was placed on the original permit to stop this from occurring.

The Dandy permit is to mine land that is the only piece of woodland available to wildlife to move north-south.

Cr Leticia Laing moved the mo-



Councillors have sent a message to the Planning Minister that there was considerable community concern about sand mines, including "noise, traffic, community character, environmental degradation and rehabilitation".

tions, saying council did not "intend to demonise Dandy".

"It's a legitimate business operation with approval," Cr Laing said.

Cr Michael Whelan said the state government's focus was about "feeding the voracious appetite for sand" in Melbourne's massive construction boom.

"We need to make sure community concerns are addressed and are heard by the panel," Cr Whelan said.

"There's a juxtaposition between the visitor economy and mining and they don't fit.

"We need to put pressure on the government to make sure they are responsible."

"Systemic failures"

The motion calls on the govern-

mental body, the Earth Resources Regulator – which holds miners' bond for site rehabilitation – to ensure those bonds are sufficient for revegetation work, questioning the regulator's "systemic failures".

"The Auditor-General has been scathing of the regulator, including potential legal liabilities" Cr Whelan said.

"It's like having the fox in charge of the hen house. A mine behind the former Holden Proving Ground (at Lang Lang) hasn't been rehabilitated at all."

Shire officers said not only do local communities have to wait until the end of a mine's life for rehabilitation to occur, but that the bonds held by the state government may not cover the cost of rehabilitation

of the land.

"Some of the mines, including Dandy Pre-mix may not have enough money held in bonds for their rehabilitation and council is not aware of how many mines may be included in the bond shortfall," shire officers stated.

Councillors also called for the creation of a sand mining strategy with the government, with more sand mining applications expected in coming years, with natural reserves and viable agricultural land potential sites for sand extraction.

The ministerial call-in power is used where there is a state interest involved. Once the Minister makes a decision to call in an application, the Minister becomes the assessment manager.

Council appointments

Bass Coast Shire Council Mayor, Cr Brett Tessari has been re-elected as the Chair of the Peri Urban Group of Rural Councils.

The Mayor also represents Bass Coast with several other important advocacy organisations. Cr Tessari currently Chairs the One Gippsland committee and is Council's representative to the Municipal Association of Victoria and, along with Deputy Mayor Cr Michael Whelan, to the Australian Coastal Councils Association.

Cr Whelan also represents Council on the South East Australian Transport Study and as Chair of the South East Councils Climate Change Alliance Councillor Advisory Group.

New Year's Eve

A spokesperson for Council described New Year's Eve as "relatively quiet", with an estimated 1500-2000 people around the Cowes Jetty Triangle area.

To deal with the expected crowds, additional collections for public bins were scheduled during the Christmas/New Year period.

"Public bins are emptied at least four times a week during the summer period and more frequently in identified high-traffic areas," the spokesperson said.

"Public place bins in high traffic areas such as the Cowes CBD were emptied daily between Christmas and New Year's Day, with an additional afternoon pick up on New Year's Eve."

There is no data available on the volume or weight of waste collected from public place bins.

Council confirmed it received three complaints about overflowing public bins, along with general litter complaints.

In good news for dog lovers, there were no callouts for lost dogs on New Year's Eve.

There were also no reports of dog attacks or infringements issued by Council for dogs off-leash over the Christmas/New Year period.

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Expect delays on highway from big sand miners

Phillip Island residents and visitors will face permanent delays on the Bass Highway if a Grantville sand mine expansion gets the green light, according to a local residents' group.

John Reid, a spokesman for the residents' group, said under a planning permit currently seeking approval, Dandy Pre-mix quarries proposes to build a new set of traffic lights on the Bass Highway on the Melbourne-side of Grantville, "purely for their own use".

Mr Reid said under the planning permit, Dandy Pre-mix said there would be 120 trucks coming out onto the highway using the traffic lights every day.

"If you do the maths of those 120 truck movements, at about two minutes per traffic light change, then that adds up to about four hours of stoppage on the highway, from 6am to 6pm," he said.

"It will obstruct every other vehicle on the highway for their own business needs.

"In other words about one per cent of traffic will hold up 99 per cent of the rest of the traffic and especially cause chaos in holiday times, and especially when buses return to the Penguin Parade."

Mr Reid is one of 73 objectors to the Dandy Pre-mix planning application, with the decision taken out of the hands of the Bass Coast Shire in December, after the Planning Minister Richard Wynne used his power to call in the permit decision.

Dandy Pre-mix - previously given mining approval in 2013 at 1381 Bass Highway - is seeking to expand their current Grantville sand mine, with councillors at the December meeting voicing their



John Reid, spokesman for the residents' group, said if the Dandy Pre-mix planning permit was approved, there would be 120 trucks coming out onto the Bass Highway every day, which would cause delays for anyone travelling to Phillip Island.

clear concern about the ministerial decision (see separate story).

Mr Reid said residents were frustrated that once again they were fighting the same issues raised in the original 2013 planning permit, adding Dandy was this time round seeking to double the amount of sand mining.

He said in 2013 when residents took Dandy Pre-mix to Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal, VCAT had at that time refused the traffic light application as well as Dandy's request to dig below the water table.

"But again they're seeking to mine below the aquifer to access water for a giant dam, even though the aquifer is crucial to the Western Port Bay environment."

Mr Reid said Dandy Pre-mix had previously told residents they would protect and preserve native flora as part of a biolink, "but now they want to take out all the vegetation and mine it".

"We're frustrated we have to fight this for a second time and that Dandy Pre-mix has been disingenuous in the past and what they're seeking to do now."

— ADVERTORIAL —

Help the Hooded Plovers

A special information stall hosted by Birdlife Australia and Bass Coast Friends of the Hooded Plover is happening at 7am on Saturday, January 16 in San Remo.

The session aims to help dog walkers and members of the public share the beach with a pair of Hooded Plovers, which are attempting to raise chicks this summer.

A planned "dogs breakfast" had to be abandoned due to Covid restrictions.

Stephen Johnson, coordinator of the Bass Coast Friends of the Hooded Plover group said the session will include an information stall and a presentation from a Hooded Plover expert.

"There will be doggie treats and a complimentary dog lead for those attending with their canine.

"It will start at 7am in the Lions Club Picnic Park on Davis Point and Back Beach roads," he said.

"Local Hoodie Volunteers will be present along with a Hooded Plover expert - Dr Kasun Ekanayake from Birdlife Australia's Beach Nesting Bird Team - to answer questions and talk about the plight of the Hooded Plover and how you can help them when out walking your dog on this beach near their site."

The group is hoping local residents and visitors can help support the vulnerable little birds.

"This pair are really struggling to successfully fledge a chick," said Stephen.

"This one chick arrived just before Christmas Day from a two-egg clutch which was their second attempt this summer.

"Their first attempt was a three-egg nest which lasted close to hatching when all three eggs disappeared from the nest.

"Last summer the same pair at this



An information session to raise awareness of the plight of the Hooded Plovers is being held at 7am on Saturday, January 16, at the Lions Club Park in San Remo.

site lost six chicks from two clutches of three.

"The adult birds really work hard at this beach because it is so heavily visited by beach goers and dog walkers at this time of the year."

The area is a designated on-leash dog walking beach but not all dog owners are doing the right thing said Stephen.

"There is much non-compliance, and we would like to help out these birds by turning that around through education.

"The information session is a way of informing people these birds need public assistance if they are to sustain a viable population of upcoming young birds.

"We are also able to reach out to potential volunteers who might be interested in becoming Hoodie Watchers.

"It's a wonderful pastime that gets you out and about with nature. These wonderful little birds really do have a lot of personality but also many threats impacting on their breeding success rates."

Doubts cast on state government motives

The state government's declaration of Bass Coast Shire as a Distinctive Areas Landscape has been touted as a win for the local community, expected to limit urban growth and protect the environment.

However for the first time a Bass Coast Shire councillor has cast doubt on the motives of the DAL, hinting it may have a hidden agenda.

In a debate about the growing sand mining industry at the December meeting, Cr Michael Whelan questioned why the state government was doggedly pushing for more sand mining at the same time as the government is applying strict planning guidelines - expected to

be unveiled in a Statement of Planning Policy any month - through the DAL.

"The area may be distinctive because of its quarry industry and not significant for its environment," Cr Whelan suggested.

He added that while the shire had a good rapport with the state government "it is important to stand up on behalf of the community when there are differences".

Currently Work Authorities for extractive mining in the Bass Coast Shire issued by the state government give little or any control to council and therefore local communities for how extractive mining activities can unfold sustainably.



Information Stall
Saturday 16th Jan



Bring your dog and receive a FREE dog lead!

Come along to a FREE information stall, learn about the local threatened beach-nesting birds, how you can help wildlife and local dog walking locations. Giveaways for all - even the dog!



Location: Lions Park Shelter
Corner of Back Beach and Davis Point Roads, San Remo
Time: Sat 16th Jan, 7am onwards



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Hopes dashed for road upgrade

From page 1

"This isn't an ordinary road," she said.

"It's a secondary road used by the public. Do they seriously think they are going to bus 500 kids up and down Potters Hill Road?"

"And what about local kids who want to walk or ride to school?"

One resident told the Advertiser "if there's enough growth in this area to justify another school, there's enough to justify sealing two of San Remo's main roads".

Bronwyn Pratt, another member of the residents' group, agreed.

"The road is dangerous to drive down, let alone ride a bike or walk. And access to the school needs to include a footpath."

Bronwyn said traffic on Shetland Heights Road was already heavy and with ongoing subdivisions in the area and now the new school campus, things would only get worse.

"The last five years, traffic has been getting worse and worse. Shetland Heights is now a major road in and out of San Remo, especially in the holidays, or if there's an accident or delay on Phillip Island Road."

She described current conditions on the road as "deadly", saying she couldn't count the number of small accidents that had happened, from broken windscreens to cars falling into the drains when they pull off to the side of the road.

And with an increasing number of cars and trucks, many speeding down the unmade road, the ever-present dust was a major health hazard for residents.

"If you walk along that road, you get covered in a yellow-white dust. It gets in your clothes and shoes and you can't get it out."

"I'm an asthmatic and I've had three bouts of bronchitis in the last year because of this damn dust."

She said the road needed to be



Back in March 2019, residents of Shetland Heights Road in San Remo called for the road to be sealed due to increasing traffic and health concerns. They say the decision to locate the new secondary campus in San Remo has intensified the need for the road to be upgraded.

upgraded immediately, before construction started on the new school.

"We need a proper footpath, gutting, chicanes. We can't wait until the school goes in."

"If all these trucks drive up and down, the road will be destroyed even more."

Fritzie said the residents would continue to try and set up a meeting with Jordan Crugnale, so she could "talk to residents and get our views and be part of whatever plan we put forward".

She also called on Council to communicate with the residents.

"I am disappointed that the council has not been communicating with us over the period."

"I expect they will attempt to revert to a special charge scheme, but they haven't told us what it will cost and haven't done any of the feasibility studies they promised in 2019."

But she's hoping Council will work with the state government and residents to find a solution.

"I don't think anyone argues that it has to be done."

Western Port Ward Councillor Bruce Kent, himself a San Remo resident, said he believed Potters

Hill and Shetland Heights roads are both unsafe in their current state.

"I would hope the school would be a complete package, from delivering the education side and delivering a safe environment for kids to get to school in the first place."

A long campaign

In March 2019, the local residents ramped up their calls to Bass Coast Shire Council to fully seal Shetland Heights Road and install drainage and lighting to prevent a major accident.

The list of issues raised with the

council included safety, dust, poor signage, traffic volumes, lack of drainage or footpaths, health risks and excess speed. It was also noted that the roads were an alternative emergency access route and were regularly used as an alternative route to Phillip Island Road during peak periods.

A community meeting outlining the issues was attended by five of the then councillors and over 40 residents.

At the time, all the councillors supported the call for the upgrade, but noted Shetland Heights was not in the Top 20 list of council's Urban Upgrade Priority Program, which determines the order of the council's special charge schemes.

Residents were told any upgrade to the road would need to part of a special charge scheme, which would include contributions from residents.

To accelerate the process, the residents submitted a petition to council showing that 70 per cent of residents supported a special charge scheme to upgrade the road.

As a result Shetland Heights Road is now number two on the Urban Upgrade Priority Program.

However, funds were not allocated in the 2019/20 budget for the project, after the new campus location was announced, as council said it was working with "the Victorian School Building Authority's Engineering Consultant to achieve the best infrastructure outcomes in support of the new school site".

As a result, the spokesperson confirmed council had not "provided funds for the full construction of Shetland Heights Road in its Long Term Financial Plan".

Residents said the community meeting and consultations promised by the council in 2019 had failed to eventuate.

BCH Maternal & Child Health Service, Cowes, will be relocated for Christmas.

The Phillip Island Early Learning Centre will be taking a break from 21/12/2020 to 08/01/2021

During this Christmas break a pop up MCH site will be set up from the Phillip Island Health Hub:

50-54 Church Street, Cowes

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January Bin Collections



- Recycling (yellow) and Organics (green) bins are being collected weekly during January
- Landfill (red) bins remain as a fortnightly collection

For the full calendar visit www.basscoast.vic.gov.au/bincalendar or contact our Waste Services Team on 1300 BCOAST (226 278) or (03) 5671 2211.

■ Recycling bin and Organics bin

■ Landfill bin, Recycling bin and Organics bin

Zone 1

Monday: Cape Woolamai, Wimbleton Heights, Ventnor

Tuesday: Newhaven, Rhyll, Smiths Beach, Sunderland Bay, Surf Beach, Sunset Strip

Wednesday: Bass, Grantville, Pioneer Bay, Jam Jerrup, The Gurdies, Lang Lang

Thursday: Silverleaves, Cowes

January 2021

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
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11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

Zone 2

Monday: Corinella, Coronet Bay, Tenby Point

Tuesday: Dalyston, Harmers Haven, Kilcunda, San Remo, Archies Creek, Cape Paterson

Wednesday: Inverloch

Friday: Wonthaggi, South Dudley, Wattle Bank

January 2021

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

— ADVERTORIAL —

On track for family fun these holidays

Phillip Island Grand Prix Circuit is the destination for the whole family with many hours of entertainment and enjoyment on offer, and over these school holidays is the ideal time to visit.

Go Karts and Tandems

Strap yourself into the all-new Sodi Go Karts for an exhilarating session on the 750-metre track – a replica of the world-renowned Phillip Island Grand Prix Circuit. Push out a series of hot laps and try to set the fastest time.

With 9-horsepower Honda GX 270cc engines, the French-made karts provides an ultimate karting sensation and are tested to meet the stringent Australian standards.

The RT8 Evo2 single karts can reach up to 65k/mph and feature a high front blade for greater safety and a roll bar with all-round protection to avoid wheel-to-wheel contact. The harness seatbelt and easy-to-use seat adjusters allow for greater comfort and custom fitting.

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Grand Prix Motorcycle Collection at the Circuit

The star exhibit in the History of Motorsport Display is the superb collection of 25 Grand Prix winning motorcycles from the two famous Italian marques, Aprilia and Cagiva, with the two-wheel treasures permanently installed in the display at Phillip Island Grand Prix Circuit Visitor Centre.

In total these sleek racing machines have won nine World Championships, 51 Grand Prix wins and 106 Podiums. Make the time these holidays to take in these magnificent pieces of racing history.

Slot Cars – the best fun for all ages

Race your family or your mates and experience the fun on Australia's largest four-lane GP Slot Car Track – an ex-

act replica of the circuit.

Racing simulators

Test your skills or challenge your mates to a simulated race on the Phillip Island Grand Prix Circuit. Go flat out down Gardner Straight, through ultra-fast Doohan Corner, slide through Stoner Corner, thread your way through Siberia and slip stream up the back straight. Watch out for the hairpin at the bottom of Lukey Heights. Who will get the bragging rights?

Champions Cafe

After all the excitement, the Champions licenced cafe delivers with its fresh menu with plenty of choices. Fantastic coffee and delicious scones, cakes, slices, muffins, pastries, sausage rolls and pies hit the spot.

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COVID-19 operating conditions

Due to current restrictions Guided Circuit Tours and Hot Laps will not be available.

Push Bike Ride Days will also not be running over the Summer. We are aiming to have these days return for the Easter School Holidays.

For further information call 03 5952 9400 or visit www.phillipislandcircuit.com.au and www.phillipislandgokarts.com.au.



Holiday fun

This happy group from Cowes enjoyed the sunshine and music at the weekend Sunday Summer Session at Churchill Island. From left to right: (back) Tori Ryan, Daniel McGinley, Christine McGinley, Jane Kent, (front) Todd Cleeland and Joel Kent.

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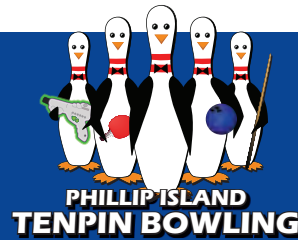


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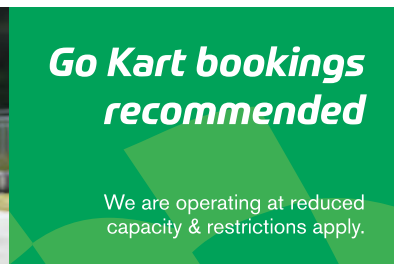
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 Crn Thompson & Church Cowes
 M. 0428 603 043

COWES SUNDAY MARKET
 Cowes Jetty Triangle
 Sunday 17th January 2021 | 9am - 2pm

MARKET ON CHAPEL
 23rd January 9am - 2pm
 86 CHAPEL STREET COWES
 Phillip Island Markets Contact 0428 603 043

ISLAND FORESHORE MARKET
 Saturday 23rd January 3pm - 9pm
 Jetty Triangle > The Esplanade > Erehwon Point
 Phillip Island Markets M. 0428 603 043

Regional Farmers Market Churchill Island
 8am - 1pm Saturday, 16 January

COMMUNITY

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FISH & CHIPS





Exciting video project at Pop-Up art show

An exciting new video project featuring four visual artists from Bass Coast will run in conjunction with the Phillip Island Contemporary Exhibition Space (PICES) Pop-Up Art Show in the third week of January.

These four interviewed artists will tell their stories about their time during COVID-19 and how it has affected both their practice and emotional wellbeing.

Each artist was asked questions about their beginnings, their art process and their time through lockdown. Artists include: Susan Hall, painter and printmaker; Pip Cleeland, painter and illustrator; Susan Brereton, artist and photographer; and Steve Parker, painter and designer.

Along with the videos, a selection of the artists' work will be displayed on the gallery walls.

The videos will be shown between January 13 and 18 at the Phillip Island Community and Learning Centre (PICAL), Garden Room 3, 56-58 Church Street, Cowes.

Open 6 days from 10am to 4pm. Closed Tuesdays.

Visit pices.com.au for more information.

The resilience project videos have been generously funded and supported by the Bass Coast Shire Council and Regional Arts Victoria (RAV).



Painter and printmaker Susan Hall is one of four artists featured in the PICES Pop-Up Art Show at PICAL from January 13-18. The exhibition includes video interviews of the artists, documenting their time during COVID-19.

PIMHAG garage sale

Phillip Island Medical and Health Group (PIMHAG) members are running a garage sale this Saturday (January 16) PIMHAG members, all volunteers, have worked tirelessly over the past decade to achieve vastly improved health services for the island.

PIMHAG is an advocacy group, not a fundraising group; but there are some costs that need to be covered.

It is hoped that the garage sale will raise \$500 to pay PIMHAG's insurance cost for this year.

Goods toward the garage sale would also be appreciated if anyone has suitable items that they would like to donate.

The garage sale will be held at 25 Shearwater Avenue, Silverleaves, this Saturday (January 16) from 8am onwards.

Donated goods can be dropped into that address any time before Saturday.



The Health Hub Auxiliary raised funds to purchase a cardiac treadmill. Inspecting the new treadmill are (from left) Wendy Williams, Health Hub Auxiliary President, Gill Scrase, Health Hub Auxiliary Secretary and Chrissy Vojkovic, BCH Outpatient Team Leader.

Auxiliary steps up

The hard work and perseverance of the BCH Phillip Island Health Hub Auxiliary has certainly paid off.

The Auxiliary took on the challenge of raising over \$30,000 for a much-needed Cardiac Treadmill system and successfully reached this target.

The Committee and members worked tirelessly, holding a range of fundraisers in 2019 and early 2020.

Everybody will remember the excitement of the draw of a Kawasaki Motorbike earlier this year just before fundraising activities ceased due to COVID-19.

President Wendy Williams was astounded by community support and the generosity of visitors and locals alike.

"It was a huge effort by all and we would like to say a special thank you to everyone who supported the Auxiliary with their kind donations to make this possible."

While COVID has hampered use of the treadmill this year due to restrictions around "aerosol generating procedures", Bass Coast Health Outpatient Team Leader Chrissy Vojkovic is looking forward to it being used by BCH Cardiac Specialists in the new year.

The Auxiliary also reminded everyone to keep March 14 free.

"We will be holding the second Phillip Island Health Hub Race in partnership with the Woolamai and District Racing Club at the Woolamai Race Track, so watch this space!" said Wendy.

PICES ▶

COVID 19 VIDEOS

JAN 13 - JAN 18

@PICAL,
56-58 CHURCH STREET,
COWES 10AM - 4PM DAILY
CLOSED TUESDAY

IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE POPUP ART SHOW pices.com.au

Special Art Exhibition

at the Iluka Studio Gallery Silverleaves

LIGHTER MOMENTS

BASS COAST PHILLIP ISLAND

Selection of art from three well known painters on Phillip Island
DAVID TAYLOR A.W.I.F.V.A.S, DIANA EDWARDS AGRA.F, TOM TYRRELL
Open each day 10am - 4.30 pm through Jan 2021.

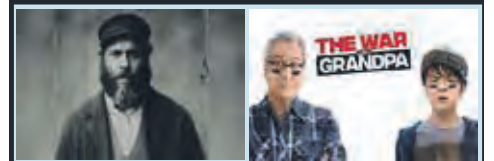
Commencing Sunday 3 January, 2021, 10 am - 4.30 pm.
Framed and unframed paintings are for sale.
Tickets available for a special raffle of a painting by each artist.
Proceeds to the Phillip Island Golf Club.
Winners of the raffle will be notified.
Drawn on Sunday the 31 January 3pm.

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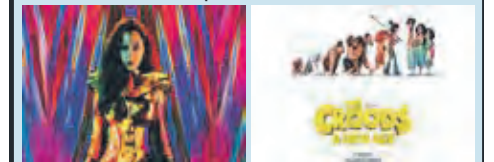
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Wonthaggi Cinema

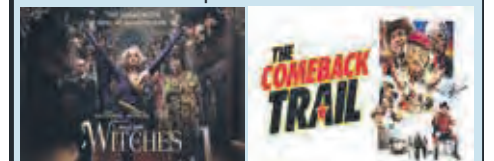
JAN 13 - JAN 30



An American Pickle [PG]		The War with Grandpa [PG]	
Wed 13	1:00pm	Wed 13	10:00am
Wed 13	4:00pm	Wed 13	7:00pm
Thu 14	4:00pm	Thu 14	1:00pm
Fri 15	10:00am	Sat 16	1:00pm
Tue 19	1:00pm		
Fri 22	1:00pm		
Mon 25	7:00pm		
Wed 27	4:00pm		
Fri 29	1:00pm		



Wonder Woman 1984 [M]		The Croods: A New Age [PG]	
Thu 14	7:00pm	Sat 16	4:30pm
Fri 15	4:00pm	Mon 18	1:00pm
Sat 16	1:00pm	Tue 19	4:00pm
Mon 18	4:00pm	Wed 20	10:00am
Tue 19	7:00pm	Thu 21	7:00pm
Wed 20	4:00pm	Fri 22	4:00pm
Thu 21	10:00am	Sat 23	10:00am
Fri 22	7:00pm	Mon 25	4:30pm
Sat 23	1:00pm	Wed 27	1:30pm
Mon 25	1:00pm	Thu 28	4:00pm
Tue 26	7:00pm	Fri 29	10:00am
Wed 27	10:00am	Sat 30	1:00pm
Thu 28	10:00am		
Fri 29	7:00pm		
Sat 30	7:00pm		



The Witches [M]		The Comeback Trail [MA15+]	
Thu 14	4:00pm	Fri 15	7:30pm
Fri 15	1:00pm	Mon 18	7:30pm
Sat 16	7:00pm	Wed 20	1:00pm
Mon 18	10:00am	Thu 21	4:00pm
Tue 19	10:00am	Sat 23	7:00pm
Wed 20	7:30pm	Thu 28	1:30pm
Thu 21	1:30pm	Sat 30	4:00pm
Fri 22	10:00am		
Sat 23	4:30pm		
Mon 25	10:00am		
Tue 26	4:00pm		
Wed 27	7:00pm		
Thu 28	7:00pm		
Fri 29	4:00pm		
Sat 30	10:00am		

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BE BUSHFIRE READY



Agencies working together to ensure the island is fire ready include members of the CFA, police, Parks Victoria, Bass Coast Shire Council, DELWP, Vic Roads and Phillip Island Nature Parks.

Ensuring Bass Coast is fire ready this summer

Bass Coast's Municipal Fire Management Planning Committee (MFMP) is the team which makes sure our region is fire ready this summer.

Despite cooler and wetter conditions so far this year, the team has been working hard to prepare for the summer bushfire season which members acknowledge may come late, but will arrive with fire danger ever present.

The committee has developed the Municipal Fire Management Plan, which identifies different levels of bushfire risk for different localities and identifies how to reduce the risk.

Members include Country Fire Authority (CFA), Victoria Police, Parks Victoria, Forest Fire Management Victoria (DELWP), Phillip Island Nature Parks, Bass Coast Shire Council and VicRoads. These agencies work together with Ausnet Services, Westernport Water and South Gippsland Water to plan for potential bushfire emergencies in Bass Coast.

In preparation for the upcoming fire season, Nature Parks Rangers have identified a range of fire management priorities, such as visitor and community safety, protection of life and property and the protection of habitat for wildlife such as koalas, Little Penguins and Short-Tailed Shearwater colonies.

"Our primary prevention activities include vegetation management, slashing of strategic fuel breaks near residential areas, along with Ranger patrols, education and implementing Nature Parks regulations," said Phillip Island Nature Parks Senior Ranger Stefan Poll.



A fire earlier this month at Hutchinson Beach, started by an abandoned camp fire was swiftly brought under control by teams from the CFA and Phillip Island Nature Parks.

"We are also ensuring our firefighting vehicles are appropriately fitted out and fully operational to conduct first attacks on fires in the event of an incident."

"This was recently put to the test when an abandoned campfire on Hutchinson Beach spread to surrounding vegetation, but was swiftly brought under control by the CFA and Nature Parks firefighting teams. It's a timely reminder that no fires are permitted within the Na-

ture Parks."

Bass Coast Shire Mayor, Cr Brett Tessari, explained that Council has identified where and how to reduce fire risk across Bass Coast.

"Vegetation has dried out considerably over the last few weeks and early indicators are pointing to a long and challenging fire season ahead," Cr Tessari said.

"It's not too late to clean up your property if you haven't already done so, but the window for burn-

ing off has now closed."

Council also maintains a number of Fire Access Tracks and Static Water tanks that are checked during the lead-in to summer to ensure their availability for fire agencies.

Parks Victoria's Area Chief Ranger Gerard Delaney explained that fire preparations are well underway in Parks Victoria-managed areas across the Bass Coast.

"The current conditions in our parks are starkly different from the

same time last year. However, we are prepared for any eventuality."

"If you would like to report potential fire hazard concerns on public land, please phone 13 1963."

Victoria Police Senior Sergeant Andy O'Brien said that the 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 Triple Zero (000) or Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000.

The fire danger period for Bass Coast started on 16 December 2020 and runs through until May 1, 2021.

CFA Community Safety will be delivering a number of community education activities in Bass Coast during the 2020/21 summer, visiting caravan parks and other popular locations.

"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," said Damien O'Connor of Bass Coast Group of Fire Brigades.

"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."

For further information call Vic Emergency Hotline on 1800 226 226 or visit:- Nature Parks www.penguins.org.au/conservation/environment/conservation-programs/fire-management/ or CFA www.cfa.vic.gov.au

Fire restrictions declared

CFA fire restrictions are now in place across Gippsland, including Phillip Island.

The restrictions will continue until May 1, 2021.

CFA's Assistant Chief Officer (ACO) South East, Trevor Owen said now the Fire Danger Period (FDP) had been declared, fires can't be lit in the open air without a permit.

"This fire season's outlook and current conditions indicate that this summer has the potential to be a grassfire-dominated season, with average rainfall seeing significant grass growth across many parts of the region," Trevor said.

"This may mean shorter-dura-

tion fires in grassed areas and dry forests during hotter and windier days.

"While CFA and our partner agencies Fire Rescue Victoria and Forest Fire Management Victoria are doing everything we can to prepare for the bushfire season, we look to the community to use common sense and take responsibility for preventing fires.

"There is still a short window of opportunity to clean up your property if you haven't already done so.

"But people need to be aware that if using fire to clean up properties they need to register these through the Fire Permits Victoria website or by calling 1800 668 511".

FFMVic Acting Deputy Chief Officer, Kelly Rash said despite the rain over the past months, forest fuels can still be quite dry and it may not take "much of a spark from a burn-off or an unattended campfire to start a bushfire".

"CFA and FFMVic crews had a huge season last summer and we want to do everything we can to minimise the risk of another this summer.

"Prepare your property, prepare yourself and prepare your family for fire. Have a fire plan in place and most importantly, practise it."

To find out more about getting ready for the fire season visit www.cfa.vic.gov.au or call 1800 226 226.

Improve your safety this fire season

Fire Restrictions came into effect on December 14.

If you are not sure what you can and cannot do during this period, the CFA has created a special safety program. As well as information available on its website you can contact one of their education team members through the Fire Safety Outreach Program.

The Fire Safety Outreach program is a free service for community members and professionals to access information and fire safety information from experienced CFA personnel.

- Find out about:
- Bushfire planning for your household
 - Property preparation for bush-

fire

- Understanding the fire danger ratings

- Where to gain trusted information during emergencies

- Fire restrictions, what you can and cannot do

- Home fire safety information

- Support education sessions for your community groups and clubs

CFA community education officers will get in touch at a time that suits, via whatever communication method works for you.

To register your interest for the program please email: firesafetyoutreach@cfa.vic.gov.au or call 0419 874 484 (in business hours).

Details also available at cfa.vic.gov.au

Are you bushfire ready?

As the weather heats up, it's more important than ever to be prepared for bushfires.

Despite our coastal location, Phillip Island is considered a Bushfire Prone Area.

A state-wide fire risk register identifies areas at risk from bushfires by looking at the vegetation, access to water supplies and how vulnerable people would be in the event of a fire.

Several areas of Bass Coast are recognised as "extreme risk", while on Phillip Island, Silverleaves and Cape Woolamai are rated as a "significant" risk.

Twelve areas on the island have Bushfire Management Overlays including Summerland Peninsula, sections of Ventnor, Rhyll, Silverleaves, Scenic Estate, Cape Woolamai, Newhaven and Churchill Island.

Community information guides have been prepared for Silverleaves and Cape Woolamai and Neighbourhood Safe places have been identified.

These are "places of last resort" for people to come to in the event of a bushfire.

Experts warn that while these places may provide some protection from radiant heat, they are often open fields or reserves with little or no facilities.

They do not guarantee safety and survival.

Leaving early is your greatest chance of surviving a bushfire.

This is why the advice from the government, the CFA and Bass Coast Shire Council is to prepare your own bushfire survival plan.

"On the Island, if you live near areas that have significant bush, long grass, or coastal scrub, then you need to plan ahead for the fire season," said a council spokesperson.

"Not everyone thinks clearly in an emergency and having a Plan means you know what to do when you're at risk of fire. A written and practised plan, will help you remember what needs to be done during a crisis."

Fire danger level

Bass Coast is in the Central fire district, and this summer Council advises all residents and visitors to keep updated on the fire danger ratings.

"The higher the rating, the more dangerous the situation if a fire starts.

"On these days, you may want to leave early and considering going to family or friends in a low-risk fire



With bushfire season upon us, now is a good time to put together a bushfire plan. "A written and practised plan, will help you remember what needs to be done during a crisis."

area, or to a place of relative safety."

With one road on and one road off, Phillip Island is particularly vulnerable to traffic disruption in the event of a major bushfire.

But even a localised fire can make driving hazardous.

"In a bushfire, smoke will make it hard to see and traffic jams and accidents are likely," a Council spokesperson said.

"The CFA advise that if you live next to grassland and a grassfire starts, walk at least two streets back from the fire.

"If you live two or three streets away from grassland and a grassfire starts, stay where you are, as grassfires are unlikely to spread into built-up areas.

"This will help to keep roads clear

for emergency services."

Place of Last Resort

A Bushfire Place of Last Resort (also known as a Neighbourhood Safer Place), is one of the high-risk bushfire survival options.

According to the CFA and bushfire experts, it's only a place you should go to when your Bushfire Survival Plan has failed.

It shouldn't be an alternative to having your own survival plan.

Experts say many houses will provide more effective protection than a designated Place of Last Resort and there may be no provision for pets and no amenities such as food, drinks or toilets.

It's also important to consider how you would travel to a Bushfire Place

of Last Resort as traffic congestion and road accidents, fire activity and smoke may become a problem.

Bushfire Place of Last Resort on Phillip Island are located at the Cowes Recreation Reserve - 1-15

Church Street and in Cape Woolamai, Woolamai Park at 11-19 Sunnyside Avenue.

For more information on bushfire survival options, see www.cfa.vic.gov.au

Emergency help

The VicEmergency Hotline on 1800 226 226, the VicEmergency app and VicEmergency website provide information during emergency incidents in Victoria.

They provide a centralised location to access timely warn-

ings and emergency information on what to do if an emergency like a bushfire impacts on Phillip Island.

Be prepared. Download the app and store the hotline number in your phone.

Grass fire the season's biggest risk

The Seasonal Bushfire Outlook for Victoria released last year identified grassfires as a significant risk this bushfire season.

The above average rainfall in spring means there's been substantial grass growth, creating ideal conditions for grassfires.

While the report said Victoria is likely to experience a less severe bushfire season this summer, the CFA is reminding everyone not to be complacent, as an average fire season in this state can still be a bad one.

Phillip Island is located in CFA District 8, and Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) Stephen Keating said due to an above average rainfall season, the district has experienced exceptional pasture and grass growth during spring.

"The fire season is upon us and landowners should be preparing their properties and ensuring their fire plans are current," ACFO Keating said.

"Grass fuels will support rapid

moving fires and people living in or near rural areas can be impacted by fires very quickly on windy days once the grass has cured.

"A well-prepared property is more defensible and will provide a greater level of protection to its occupants."

He reminded motorists that grass fires are a significant risk to road users over the summer period.

"Never try to drive through smoke, it is highly likely that fire crews and other vehicles may be obscured and the risk of hitting someone or an object is very high," ACFO Keating said.

"If you encounter fires or smoke across the road, turning around is the safest option."

He said while the CFA and partner agencies were doing everything they could to prepare for the bushfire season, they looked to the community to "use common sense and take responsibility for preventing fires".

"People need to be aware that if they're using fire to clean up around

their properties they need to register these through the Fire Permits Victoria website or by calling 1800 668 511.

"So far this season, out-of-control burn-offs and unregistered burn-offs have already caused unnecessary callouts to brigades," he said.

"You should not burn-off when winds are high or high winds are forecast - not only on the day of your burn but for the days afterwards.

"For information about burn-off restrictions specific to your area, consult your local council."

He said during the Fire Danger Period (FDP), the CFA has a zero-tolerance approach to any fires caused by negligent behaviour.

"Expect any escaped or uncontrolled fire you start to be investigated by CFA and Victoria Police," ACFO Keating said.

Victorians can find out "Can I or Can't I?" information at cfa.vic.gov.au/warnings-restrictions or by calling VicEmergency Hotline on 1800 226 226.



Grassfires have been identified as a significant risk this bushfire season, due to above average rainfall in spring and significant grass growth.

Bed tax a solution to rental bad behaviour?

A bed tax and a cap on online rental bookings have been proposed by a Bass Coast Shire councillor as a possible remedy to bad behaviour from commercial holiday homes.

The proposal comes after an anecdotal increase in complaints from permanent residents who live next to "Airbnb party houses", with one group of visitors in Cowes last year leading to \$30,000 damage at their rental as well as a crime spree in Cowes.

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

Real estate agents, too, report 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 roundtable to "thrash out" solutions (see separate story).

The concerns follow a new code of conduct for short-term rentals in New South Wales, which came into force on December 18, which includes standards to be followed by hosts, guests, letting agents and online booking platform operators, with a "two strikes and you're out" policy (see separate story).

Getting worse

Cr Bruce Kent – who is also a police officer – said the problem was not general holiday homeowners, or even rentals with landlords on site, but permanent commercial holiday letting homes in residential areas by off-site owners through online platforms.

Cr Kent said 10-15 years ago ratepayers would rent their holiday homes at peak holiday season and major events.

"But in the past five years it has progressed to a more commercial enterprise, people who have a property and run it as a business," he said.

"Residents who don't live here have tapped into a good income, which is good for them, but it shouldn't be detrimental to their permanent neighbours.

"I'm now getting people saying to me you wouldn't allow me to set up a panel beating business in a built-up residential area so why do you allow a commercial business to run next door to my house?"

"The feedback I'm getting is it's a business detrimental to the lifestyle of permanent residents. It's not entirely fair.

"I hear comments like "I didn't buy a house to have to put up with party goers every weekend". That's a problem.

"It's one of those issues that has popped up over the last couple of years and it's not going away, it might even get worse.

"I think we have got to get the balance right between permanent residents and tourists."

He said the problem was across commercial holiday rental platforms where there was no local management oversight, but especially the likes of Airbnb, which was the most popular and largest of the platforms.

Two problems

Cr Kent said complaints fall into two categories: firstly the more serious "extreme" party houses.

"At the extreme are some houses that can accommodate 20 people. They'll have up to 14 cars at the front and they are party houses," Cr Kent said.

"Police know of a handful of party houses that they get called back to. It's not uncommon for police to get called out at 3am for loud music."

Secondly, he said, are the low-level, "boisterous" visitors who nonetheless



Schoolies sees a rise in complaints from neighbouring permanent homes, with this Cowes rental celebrations spreading along the street; meanwhile one group of weekend visitors in Cowes last year led to \$30,000 damage at their rental as well as a crime spree in Cowes.

disturb permanent residents each weekend.

"Those are the ones where a few friends, good people, will come together in an Airbnb, sit on the deck, or in the spa. They're not party animals but they are boisterous and this happens weekend after weekend.

"For permanent residents it's not like living next to a neighbour. You are living next to different people each weekend and so every weekend they're thinking 'how are these visitors going to behave?'

"For those neighbours it's the unknown. One of the greatest issues with mental health is not having control of your environment. And so on a Friday night when cars pull up, all the permanent neighbour is thinking is what is it going to be like this weekend?"

Solution?

Cr Kent said if there was sufficient support by residents, shire bylaws could be created to curb the problem, including a bed tax or a cap on online rental bookings.

"It's my opinion but personally I would like a bed tax introduced through the shire.

"The average permanent resident doesn't use beaches, facilities or infrastructure every day but en masse a user-pays system for tourists could pay for wear and tear, because our infrastructure needs financial support.

"Alternatively there could be a limit on the number of weekends a holiday home could be rented out."

He said the move – if successful – wouldn't send an anti-tourist message.

"We also need to send a message that, for instance, investors can confidently spend money here to create five-star accommodation (for instance at the Isle of Wight site). If there's too much competition from other accommodation investors can be reluctant to put in money."

Cr Kent said there were positives for Airbnb properties, including creating jobs in trades such as gardeners and cleaners, also attracting tourists who spend money in local towns, as well as income for homeowners and booking agencies.

"AirBnBs are producing income for local people. We have to get the balance right. It has to be looked at and get balanced feedback."

He urged any community members



Cr Bruce Kent – who is also a police officer – said Bass Coast needed "... to get the balance right between permanent residents and tourists."

to raise problems with councillors.

"If there's a strong enough response councillors will have to look at the whole system. The community will have the final say on expectations."

Red bin

Cr Kent said ratepayers were also concerned about the impact of party or boisterous houses on red bin kerbside collection.

"There's a sentiment among some locals and some councillors that tourists don't understand our bin system and so we should have extra pick-ups in summer time.

"Some of these holiday home earn up to \$4000 a week in rent, so why should their problem become ratepayers' problem?"

"We have had more than a 70 per cent reduction in landfill. Why do we want to go backwards, because if we do it will cost everyone more, not to mention the environmental side.

"Permanents do the bin system well. At Christmas I have 25 people over and I cope with the rubbish."

Cr Kent said tradespeople such as gardeners could pick up excess bins. Cowes Police Senior Sergeant Andy O'Brien said police did not keep data on Airbnb issues.

"We don't track whether they're via Airbnb or a local agent," he said.

"If it was a regular problem we would develop a response strategy.

"Any consistent display of anti-social behaviour at any given premises would certainly see an enhanced focus and response."

Agent calls for holiday rental round-table

A Phillip Island real estate agent has called on the shire to convene a round-table to "thrash out" solutions to bad behaviour from commercial holiday home rentals.

John Matthews (pictured) has run Getaway Phillip Island for 15 years and was previously the chair of the Phillip Island Tourism Association for 20 years, also running a motel where Cowes Coles now stands.

He said the problem on Phillip Island had spiked over the past five years – especially on the back of low interest rates – with an uptake of commercial holiday homes as investment properties by Melbourne owners who have no connection to the island.

Mr Matthews estimated there were now about 2500 commercial holiday home rental businesses on the island.

"A lot of the owners have basically no experience in managing commercial holiday rentals," Mr Matthews said.

"They also don't have to live across the road or next to people who party all night. They are oblivious and don't care about the issues their investment is causing. They turn a blind eye."

He said estate agencies such as Getaway Phillip Island had years of experience and policies in place to avoid negative outcomes.

"You won't find agencies renting to schoolies, for example. We block out that period and we have a blanket ban not to rent to anyone under 24.

"When we get a booking request we do an enormous amount of due diligence and have been in the business long enough to smell a rat."

Mr Matthews said all their listed holiday homeowners were directed to join Bass Coast Shire's holiday



home registration scheme (see separate story), and "we assist them to fill in the paperwork".

"But those owners are the honest ones. There's a massive amount who don't register with council."

Mr Matthews called on the shire to convene a round table of impacted people – neighbours and homeowners – to "thrash out the issues, to curtail some of the problems".

"Perhaps one of the solutions could be a levy on people who rent to schoolies or party groups who do damage to the island and where the ratepayer forks out to clean up the mess. Things like that we need to explore, to hold these people to account," he said.

"The professional owners are fine, but how do we get to those based in Melbourne and who turn a blind eye. That is the challenge."

He added that it was important for the island to maintain a good reputation to other visitors.

Shire holiday rental watchdog

Bass Coast Shire fines up to 10 holiday homeowners annually for breaches of the region's rental policy.

Under the Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008, holiday rental properties that accommodate six or more people must be registered with the shire, "to ensure they are maintained in a hygienic condition and do not adversely impact local amenity".

A shire spokesman said they currently have more than 700 properties registered for Phillip Island and in San Remo.

"We have frequent contact with property owners regarding the op-

eration of their properties, and issue fines to owners who fail to register their property," he said.

He said any funds received go to Destination Phillip Island and Destination Gippsland to be used for marketing and promotion of Phillip Island and San Remo to attract visitors.

The shire recommends any neighbours living next to problematic rental properties to call police on Triple Zero (000).

"Particularly if it is an isolated or infrequent occurrence. However, more frequent or persistent issues should be brought to council's attention," he said.

A possible solution to rental bad behaviour?

The new code of conduct for short-term rentals in NSW:

GUESTS:

- Must not make noise that unreasonably disrupts neighbours

- Must not cause damage to the premises, including any common property in a strata scheme

- Are responsible for the actions of visitors and must ensure they comply with the behaviour standards set out in the code

HOSTS:

- Must hold insurance that covers liability for third party injuries and death

- Must enable neighbours to contact them about concerns between 8am and 5pm each day

- Must take reasonable steps to ensure guests meet behaviour obliga-

tions in the code

- Must ensure the premises is not rented out to a guest who is recorded on the exclusion register

- Must register on the short-term rental accommodation premises register, which will commence in 2021

Anyone caught breaking the code is reported to a property agent or the police who then forward the complaint to NSW Fair Trading.

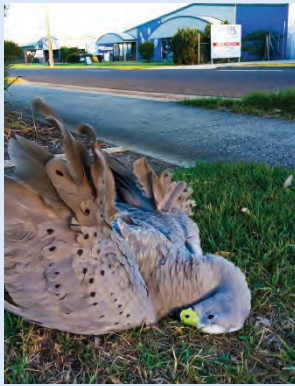
An exclusion register kept by Fair Trading has a "two-strikes and you're out" policy: anyone breaching the code can be banned from holiday letting for five years.

\$550 on-the-spot fines can also be issued, escalating to several thousands of dollars for serious breaches of the code.

Source: NSW Fair Trading

Our annual bumper SUMMER QUIZ

1. What date did Phillip Island Nature Parks restrict entry to attractions in the wake of the coronavirus?
2. What's the population of French Island (within a range of 20)?
3. What is planned for 45 hectares on Back Beach Road and Gap Road, opposite the Grand Prix circuit?
4. Bass Coast Shire is set to release an audit that will recommend buildings be given heritage protection. Name 3 buildings or places in Cowes that are already given heritage protection in the shire's planning scheme?
5. What is TRPI?
6. Newhaven College principal Gea Lovell retired at the end of last year after a decade in the role. Who is the new principal?
7. Western Port is a Ramsar site. What does that mean?
8. What 1.4ha site at 54-61 Forrest Avenue in Newhaven sold this year?
9. Name the new Bass Coast Shire councillors – elected in November – to represent Island Ward and Western Port Ward?
10. What land is Bass Coast Shire currently compulsorily acquiring for a future sport and recreation hub?
11. How many Cape Barren geese are there believed to be on Phillip Island?
12. The state government has pledged to build a new junior secondary campus where?

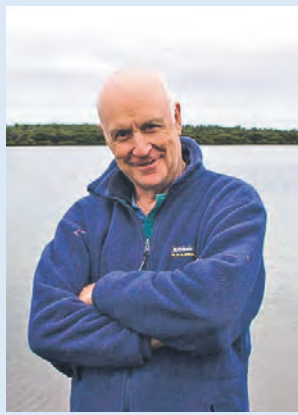


Question 14 tackles the issue of wildlife roadkill on Phillip Island.



See question 8 for the answer to this Newhaven photo.

13. Warley Hospital in Cowes was demolished this year. When was the original hospital first built?
14. What landmark new trial started on Phillip Island this year in a bid to stop roadkill?
15. Which Cowes church celebrated its 150th birthday this year?



See question 20 for this person's act of generosity.

16. A public inquiry – which was the most complex environmental assessment carried out in Victoria – ran for 10 weeks from October to December into a project on Western Port planned by AGL? What is the plan?
17. The land that once housed the Isle of Wight hotel – on the corner of The Esplanade and Bass Ave – is for sale. When did the pub burn down?
18. Name the organisation formed following the tragic death of Phillip Island's Sam Fraser, which educates the public on gender equality and family violence?
19. What is happening with plans for a Cowes to Stony Point car ferry?
20. In one of the most generous land donations in living memory, an 8ha property at Rhyll was this year gifted for environmental protection. Who donated it?

are rare or unique wetlands, "victims" across 16 species, or are important for conservation. The old Newhaven Boys and Church Street. Home, which sold for an undisclosed price. It was sold for \$3.5 million, well above the asking price of \$2.7 million. The RSL. Phillip Island and Ventnor Roads, opposite the RSL. 11. There are currently about 3000, having increased from several hundred years ago, according to the Phillip Island Nature Parks draft Wildlife Management Plan. 12. San Remo – Potters Hill Road. 13. Warley Bush Nursing Hospital was donated to the Phillip Island community in 1923 by WE Thompson, and opened its doors that year in 1923. The land, adjoining Conservation Hill Reserve overlooking the Rhyll Inlet, was bought by satirist and comedian John Clarke and his wife Helen McDonald in 1999, with the couple – up until John's death in 2017 – working hard to rehabilitate it. In July Helen donated the million-dollar site to Trust for Nature, a Victorian not-for-profit that partners with private landholders to protect the environment. 16. AGL is proposing to build a 290 metre floating Storage and Regeneration Unit (FSRU) terminal at Crib Point, which will suck up about 470 million litres of seawater – including fish eggs and larvae – with wastewater. 17. The historic Isle of Wight hotel was due to be demolished for redevelopment when a fire gutted the building in May 2010. 18. Change for Sam. 19. In February, Bass Coast Shire councillors voted to relocate all Cowes west sites as possible locations for a car ferry terminal. A proposed \$200,000 investigation into whether the Cowes Jetty is a more suitable location has yet to receive \$80,000 state government funding to proceed. 20. The land, adjoining Conservation Hill Reserve overlooking the Rhyll Inlet, was bought by satirist and comedian John Clarke and his wife Helen McDonald in 1999, with the couple – up until John's death in 2017 – working hard to rehabilitate it. In July Helen donated the million-dollar site to Trust for Nature, a Victorian not-for-profit that partners with private landholders to protect the environment.

Answers

Paul's on the mend!

Paul Chipperfield and his wife Jenny would like to say thank you to community members for the support they have been given since Paul, a well-known local bus driver, was left with severe spinal injuries after an accident in May last year.

Such an accident would have been horrific at any time, but with the Covid lockdown in place, Paul also found himself isolated from family and friends for months; first after spinal surgery at the Alfred Hospital where he had vertebrae fused together and screws put in place, and then at the Caulfield Rehabilitation Centre.

While Jenny travelled up regularly to deliver him clean clothes, toiletries and other requirements, she was not permitted to visit him inside the Centre.

And until wheelchair-friendly modifications to the family home could be made, Paul was not able to come home.

His family missed him terribly, as he did them, and just wanted Paul to be able to come home to a safe environment where he would be loved and cared for.

To this end, A Go Fund Me Page was set up by friends to raise funds for the modifications.

The Go Fund Me Page raised \$9500, and this amount was supplemented by collection tins placed in a number of island businesses, as well as the auction of a beautiful kimono by Youkis.

The funds raised covered the works required to the family home, and Paul was finally able to return home after four months away, at the end of September.

It took two months before he was able to stand on his own, and two more months of rehabilitation as he learned to walk again.

At this stage, Paul is unsure if and when he will be able to return to his much-loved job as bus driver for the kids who attend the Bass Coast Special School in Wonthaggi.

But he is working on it. The cheerful and friendly Paul is described as a great friend to the children under his care en route to and from school daily, and he would like to get back to this.

Before the May accident, Paul was no stranger to suffering.

He lost a leg some decades ago in a boating accident, at the age of 23.

But he recovered and has used a prosthetic limb to function normally since then.



Local bus driver Paul Chipperfield is slowly on the mend, after suffering serious spinal injuries in May 2020. Paul has regular sessions with Cowes physiotherapist Cara Cassells and assistant physio Deb Norris at his Cowes home.

On the mend

The good news is that after a very difficult time, Paul is on the way to recovery.

He is in an electric wheelchair and making great progress with his walking.

He still uses a frame and needs to hold on to the rails along the ramp that has been built at his home.

But Paul and Jenny are very optimistic. "It will take time, but he will get there," says Jenny.

"We are hoping for the best outcome."

Jenny and Paul wish to thank everyone in the community for their good wishes and support.

"Everyone in the community has been amazing. Their support has been fantastic."

"Thank you does not seem to be enough from us. But a big thank you to everyone."

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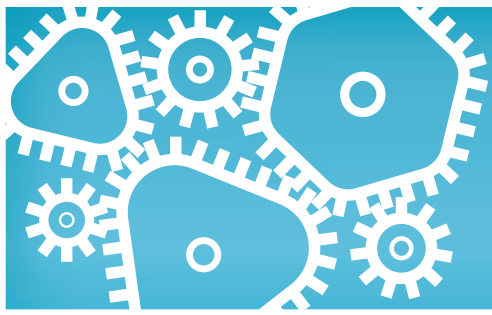
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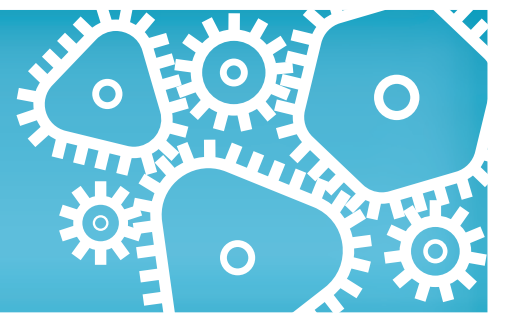
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Tell us your views with a Letter to the Editor (350 word limit). Email to advertiser@pisra.com.au, or submit online at pisra.com.au

Incredible health care

My family and I want the residents of Bass Coast Shire to know what an incredible health care system we have here.

In December we had reason to call on the Bass Coast Health Palliative Care team, for assistance in caring for our terminally ill family member.

From the first nurse that walked in our door, to the nurses who were "in the area" and called in to see how we were coping, to the nurses who were on 24-hour call and at 2am came to our assistance, we want to thank them all for the expertise and caring that they demonstrated throughout our sad journey.

These nurses at Bass Coast Health San Remo are the most incredible examples of what nursing is all about. My family wants to thank them all!

Bass Coast residents, you are in good hands.

The Caulfield family, Corinella

Not Covid safe

At the busiest time of the year, in the midst of a pandemic, in over three hours at the Nature Parks' administered Nobbies Antarctic Journey, we did not see one staff member on the floor taking care of all the paid-up visitors. As a consequence, social distancing was not adhered to, and many visitors did not wear a mask, let alone cover their nose if they were actually wearing a mask, in the indoor confined space.

Furthermore, considering the amount of funding this project received, it is a disgrace. A substantial proportion of the exhibition is text based, only in English, resulting in a significant number of visitors, ie tourists and children, unable to understand the exhibits.

This is such an obvious blunder, one has to question the motivation.

Jennifer Grimwade, Cape Woolamai

We've been duped

From the Bass Coast Shire Website: The State Government requires all Victorian Councils to adopt a new Community Engagement Policy by 1st March 2021.

The Local Government Act 2020 sets out five Principles which have to be addressed in the Community

Engagement Policy, and allowed a 12 month timeline to develop it with the community. Note a full year for a democratic process. Other Councils determined no "constraints of the timeline" as BCS has now claimed.

The Draft Policy was presented to the Council meeting on December 16 and only then was the community given an opportunity to comment, with a closing date of January 17.

It is unsurprising that Council has been asked by a number of residents for an extension of time. Remember, Christmas and New Year holidays. The fact is though that BCS residents are being asked to comment on a draft they should have helped develop in the first place during the past year!

A search of many Victorian councils provide documents showing wide consultations despite the virus with pages of information pitched at all levels of understanding, even year 7.

We have been duped. This shows a dereliction of duty and total disrespect to residents in my opinion.

Beth Banks, Wonthaggi

Silverleaves character under threat

It is most disappointing to learn of the decision by council to 'green light' the proposed development at 58 Bruce Road, Silverleaves.

The proposal attracted a significant number of objections with major concerns about destruction of significant native vegetation including the important swamp sedges, heaths and other wetland assets there and the mass and bulk having negative impacts on neighbourhood character.

I'd like to draw the attention of readers to this very poor decision by new councillor David Rooks especially because he is in Island Ward. His election statement said: "Our Island is a special place and its community assets need protecting and enhancing. I'd like to be part of the team that deliver this goal for current and future generations on the Island." He listed the second most important of his top five issues as "Inappropriate residential development. Maintaining town boundaries."

The subject site at Bruce Road has a boundary just metres from the fragile and significant deep water coastal inlet that is the Rhyll Inlet. The site has never been developed and we would have hoped it would

therefore be worthy of focus on a "neighbourhood appropriate" approach. That means a building that enhances and protects the dune on which it rests and the fragile inlet/wetland it abuts!

I voted for you, Cr Rooks!

So now, you and other councillors who voted for this development, I ask why aren't you implementing stronger protections? Council has very clear policies about protecting neighbourhood character from appropriate developments and vegetation protection.

One of the greatest threats to the Island's environment is urban development. It's out of control! The vitally important natural assets of Silverleaves, are being eroded one property at a time with Council 'green lighting' such inappropriate activities as concreting, vegetation clearing, introduction of exotic species which "escape" into foreshore, construction of mass houses, solid fencing and non-porous surfacing, too large development footprints.

So once and for all Bass Coast Shire, switch off the Green Light that has been turned on time and time again, and turn to Caution and Red before this precious area becomes totally suburbanised.

M Johnston, Silverleaves

Disability – don't make assumptions

My daughter and grandchildren came down to visit us over the weekend which was lovely.

My grandchildren were very excited to have a little holiday at Nanny and Poppy's house, giving them a focus on some fun and happy times a break away from their regular visits and long hospital admissions into the RCH where my little grandson who is only two spends a majority of his time due to a visible incurable complex health condition.

On Saturday night (January 9) they took my four-year-old granddaughter and two-year-old grandson to visit the Penguin Parade. All afternoon we talked about it and we gave them a little bit of spending money to buy something special to remember their visit.

To see their beautiful faces leave my house with such excitement was beautiful. We got sent lovely photos while they were at the Penguin Pa-

rade.

I was so happy for them. At 9.30pm I checked in with them to see how they were.

To my absolute disbelief my daughter told me that upon their return to their car which was parked in the disability car park, which they have a valid permit for due to the equipment they have to carry for my grandson to aid in breathing to live, messages had been written on the windows. On the rear window said OLD COUPLE, then on the side windows YOU SHOULD BE ASHAMED.

Did these people see my grandson's struggles in life to live each day reliant on oxygen waiting for his next hospitalisation to have further surgery?

I do not think so. You should be the ones ashamed in your assumptions.

Suzanne Hahn, Sunset Strip

Loving the ambience

I would like to say how much I am enjoying the ambience of Cowes at the moment. I know its crowded and busy – but the new cafes and sidewalks that have opened up have

made Cowes look like it should. I walked around the other night after eating in one of the many places that are well organised and practising good Covid-safe procedures and I loved the lights in the trees and all the people sitting outside in the streets and sideways. And to top it off I saw on Facebook that San Remo has this fabulous tree that has colours going up and down it!! We might have one here in Cowes, I am not sure, but I really do appreciate the team at Bass Coast Shire for their hard work and making it right. On another note, I had to ring the shire to ask about some broken glass outside an office space and within a few hours it was swept away and no negative vibes about having to do it.

So I am a happy camper this year in Cowes and the people all seem nicer too or is it me??

Anyway, well done to all the shop owners and retailers who have struggled and still are now with all the crowds – but I love the space we have created.

Jane Daly, Silverleaves

Grinch destroys Christmas decorations

Vandals have damaged or stolen the decorations and lights installed at Cowes for Christmas.

Bass Coast Shire Council is still assessing the full extent of the damage but confirmed the baubles in the roundabouts and the lights in Thompson Avenue had been targeted.

"Five of the bauble decorations were damaged, while one small bauble decoration is missing," a council spokesperson said.

"We had to recover some of the vandalised baubles from the ocean."

Two of the sets of lights installed in the trees in Thompson Avenue have been damaged and a transformer for the lights is also missing.

The spokesperson said they are hoping the decorations can be fixed and it was disappointing they had been broken or stolen.

Anyone who has any information about the damaged or missing decorations is being urged to contact the council's Customer Service Team.



Five of the giant Christmas baubles installed in roundabouts at Cowes were damaged and one has been stolen. Christmas lights installed in Thompson Avenue were also damaged.

The festive lights are due to remain in Thompson Avenue until after Australia Day, "unless further damage is done".

Similar Christmas decorations installed in Wonthaggi and Inverloch were not damaged.

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DEATHS

BAIRD Pat
Died Lakes Entrance 5.1.21.
Beloved partner of Jim Cleeland, formerly of Phillip Island.
Sincere condolences from his nieces and nephews – Gaye, Kate, Lena & Gordon, Mike & Pip, Bill & Amanda, Gary & Mary & families.

DUNN Michael
16.05.1955 - 03.01.2021
Sadly Michael passed away peacefully at King Island Hospital from an illness on Sunday January 3, 2021.
Loved life partner to Jill, loved son of Jack and Betty (dec.), and brother of Robert (dec.).
We will all miss Michael dreadfully.
A memorial service will be held, the date and time will be advised in next week's paper.

FOR SALE

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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.

IN MEMORIAM

WENHAM, Doreen Phyllis
We would like to thank all our friends for their condolences following the passing of Doreen on 4.1.2021. Also we wish to thank all the staff at Melaleuca Aged Care Home and Dr. Natalia, for their care and attention during Doreen's illness. Ian Wenham and family.

GARAGE SALES

CAPE WOOLAMAI
4 Maroubra Drive, Saturday and Sunday 8am to 4pm Moving House - Furniture, billiard table, golf stuff, beach, fishing and camping gear, assorted timber, wheelbarrows, clothes and lots of bric-a-brac.

CAPE WOOLAMAI
94 Panorama Drive Sat 16, from 8am to 4pm Bargains, tools, household goods and clothing.

COWES, 57 Norman Dr.
Sat 16 Jan - Strictly 8am start till 3pm. Moving house & selling bits and pieces. Bric-a-brac, pots, home-ware, decor, quality designer clothes, smaller furniture etc.

SILVERLEAVES
25 Shearwater Drive Saturday 16 Jan from 8am onwards - No early birds please.
ALL PROCEEDS TO TO P.I.MEDICAL&HEALTH ACTION GROUP

CHURCH NOTICES

Members should check their church websites for details of service times and guidelines.

UNITING CHURCH:
www.cowes.unitingchurch.org.au/minister.php
www.facebook.com/pages/St-Johns-Uniting-Church/828979940479969

BAPTIST CHURCH:
www.islandbaptist.org.au/

HOPE CHURCH:
are emailing members www.islandhopechurch.com/

CATHOLIC CHURCH:
www.cdsale.org.au/coronavirus
www.cdsale.org.au/prayer-and-reflection

ST PHILLIP'S ANGLICAN CHURCH:
www.anglicanparishbass-PhillipIsland.org/
www.facebook.com/stphillipsowes/

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www.facebook.com/pages/category/Christian-Church/Surf-Church-Phillip-Island-360300548086709/

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Email resume to info@thewaterboycafe.com.au or call into 58 Chapel St. Cowes and ask for Jacqui.

Position Vacancies Bass Coast Health

Bass Coast Health is seeking applications for the following positions:

DENTAL THERAPIST
Fixed term Full Time – Closes 13/1/21

ASSOCIATE NURSE UNIT MANAGER – EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT
Fixed Term Part Time – Closes 22/1/21

REGISTERED NURSE – EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT
Fixed Term Part Time – Closes 22/1/21

ASSOCIATE NURSE UNIT MANAGER – CENTRAL STERILISING DEPARTMENT
Part Time – Closes 15/1/21

REGISTERED NURSE – SUB ACUTE
Part Time – Closes 22/1/21

NURSE UNIT MANAGER – URGENT CARE CENTRE
Full Time – Closes 22/1/21

DENTIST ASSISTANT
Casual – Closes 15/1/21

For full position details, a position description and how to apply, please refer to the BCH website basscoasthealth.org.au or contact Human Resources via email hr@basscoasthealth.org.au

BCH t 5671 3333 f 5671 3300
e info@basscoasthealth.org.au w www.basscoasthealth.org.au

Phillip Island Village School

Two exciting opportunities are available at our small, democratic primary school on Phillip Island.
All positions are to commence in late January 2021.

CLASSROOM ASSISTANT – EDUCATION SUPPORT

This role is for a dynamic and experienced person to join our established and supportive team of Specialist Classroom Assistants. You will work alongside Mentors (teachers) to deliver individual learning programs within the classroom; providing one-on-one support to individual students within a group setting, as well as providing support to small groups of students during independent task time. We are looking for a relationship-focused person with a desire to engage with students around their interests and passions. Experience with students or children with diverse needs, such as Autism, ADHD and Dyslexia, is ideal.
20 hours per week (\$29/hr), 8.30am to 12.30pm Monday to Friday during our school cycles (39 weeks/year; some work required in cycle breaks).
Applications close Friday 15th January 2021.

KITCHEN ASSISTANT

We are looking for a passionate food-lover to produce delicious café-style lunchbox meals for approximately 50 students and 10 staff from Mondays to Thursdays at school. All meals will be vegetarian and based on seasonal produce. Duties will include menu planning, food ordering, food preparation and cleaning within commercial kitchen guidelines. 20 hours per week (\$28.10/hr), 8.30am to 1.30pm Monday to Thursday during our school cycles (39 weeks/year; some work required in cycle breaks).
Applications close Friday 15th January 2021.

For an overview of these positions, visit www.pivillageschool.org.au/jointheteam. If you have any questions please email kelly@pivillageschool.org.au

SITUATIONS VACANT

Bistro Gaming/Bar Positions

The Phillip Island RSL is offering exciting opportunities to become a member of our fantastic team. The successful applicants should possess the appropriate and necessary qualifications or be willing to obtain for the above positions and be available to work nights and weekends.

The Phillip Island RSL is looking for self-motivated, enthusiastic, customer service orientated and positive individuals. Commencing with casual hours with the view to permanent hours ongoing for the right person.

Quick start applicants and experience in hospitality is an advantage.

Please forward resumes indicating the position of interest to:
**Operations Manager
Phillip Island RSL
P.O Box 503
Cowes 3922
info@pirsl.com.au**

SITUATIONS VACANT

Bar Person Full Time Position

The Phillip Island RSL is offering exciting opportunity to become a member of our fantastic team. The successful applicant must possess the appropriate and necessary qualifications and be available to work nights and weekends.

The Phillip Island RSL is looking for a self-motivated, enthusiastic, customer service orientated and positive individual. Must have a current RSA and preferably TAB accreditations or willing to obtain, this role will work across all bars and requires someone with a good work ethic and willingness to upskill.

Experience in hospitality highly advantageous.

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The Phillip Island RSL is offering an exciting and rare opportunity to become a senior member of our team. The successful applicant will be available to work nights and weekends and have experience in a similar position. The Phillip Island RSL is looking for a self-motivated, enthusiastic, customer focused individual who is capable of leading a strong team environment.

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- Comprehensive experience in all areas of the Club industry.
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- Effective time management and organisational skills.

- Experience in all aspects of industry compliance and legislation.
- Computer literacy.
- Demonstrated Managerial experience in food service, bar and gaming operations.
- Drive to promote motivation and a positive workplace culture amongst all team members.

A competitive remuneration package is available for the right person.
This position provides opportunity for growth and development.
Only short listed applications will be contacted.
Applications close 15 January 2021.

Please forward resumes to:
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PO Box 503 Cowes 3922**

SITUATIONS VACANT

ASTRONOMY ASSOCIATION INC.
WE LOVE DARK SKIES

Our club is seeking a Vice President to assist with the club operations. The position is voluntary and primarily is to assist the President in Public and Members Sky Nights and fill in when a committee member is absent. In addition, having some skill in web page operations would be appreciated. If you are keen to get in on the ground floor of a new and exciting Astronomy Club, in Bass Coast, send an email to edendwhite74@gmail.com or call 0448 637 172.



Vic Swim instructors Emily Howson, Elliot Hook and Ronald Poon are pictured at the Cowes Yacht Club swim program with participants Lynton Chao – Mont Albert, Millie Hook – Bittern, Caia Lee – Richmond, Isla Johnson – Cape Woolamai, Kallum Chao – Mont Albert and Caleb Lee – Richmond.

Kids love to learn to swim!

The VICSWIM Summer Kidz Program is in full swing at the Cowes Primary School pool, and at the Cowes Yacht Club beach, with about 100 youngsters participating across both venues.

The program runs annually during the January school holidays and is subsidised by the state government.

It provides accessible and low-cost swimming and water safety lessons for kids aged 4 to 13 years old; and focuses on learn to swim and water safety skills.

The program is particularly valuable in this Covid-affected year, with children in the main across Victoria unable to access swimming classes which have had to be cancelled because of the pandemic.

“A lot of the children who are attending have missed out on swimming lessons all year,” said Jenny Merrick, Regional Co-ordinator for Aquatics and Recreation Victoria, who has been running the program at Cowes for years.

“The kids love it. And the parents love it too.”

“Most of the children are beginner swimmers. About half are locals and the other half are visitors over summer,” she said.

The program runs for three weeks, with half hour lessons run daily over a five-day period.

Parents and guardians can enrol their kids into one, two or three programs across the three weeks on offer.

Sessions at Cowes Prima-



Makayla Keene (Rhyll), Lily Saville from Cranbourne, staying with Nan in Cowes and Grace McGoldrick with instructor Cailin Lees of Cowes



Instructor Emily Howson helps Caia Lee float. Lynton Chao from Mont Albert and Elliot Hook from Bittern look on.

ry run between 8.30am and 3pm. At the Cowes Yacht Club, the program runs from 10am to 1pm.

Teachers are qualified instructors and water safety is also covered.

The program is subsidised

by the state government and thus very affordable at \$30 for five lessons.

Group numbers are small. Jenny said a few places remain, and anyone interested can go to the Vic Swim website to check for availability.

Results of the Rhyll Angling Comp 2021

The weather was marvellous for the Sixth Rhyll-Phillip Island Angling Club (RPIAC) Angling Competition of the 2020/2021 Season, held over January 9 and 10.

Boating and fishing proved to be extremely popular activities and timing was key to avoid delays at the Rhyll boat ramp.

The new webcams streamed images of the boat ramp traffic and carpark from the RPIAC clubroom, providing regular updates to those using the Boating Vic app.

Each day the carpark was at capacity by 7am and water views were obscured by cars and trailers using the foreshore and surrounding streets for overflow parking.

Conversely, from the water, it was difficult to look towards land without a boat in sight.

Usually, the serenity of angling is enhanced by gentle lapping of water against the boat's hull, an idyllic breeze passing by and the occasional cheer of a triumphant and exited angler.

This weekend was somewhat different, with some recreational boaters choosing to use anchored vessels as slalom cones whilst generating maximum noise.

Perhaps this was a quest to break a water-speed record, create surf-worthy bow waves, or merely release some post-

lockdown freedom anxiety.

Certainly, the fishing improved with less on-water activity and this was a consistent report from the anglers.

Complying with the new normal of Covid-Safe requirements, including contact tracing, a total of 43 fish were weighed in over the weekend's competition, concluding at the close of weigh-in at 5.30pm on Sunday.

Chris Leonardos earned the \$1000 prize for his 33.8 kilogram mullet (exceeding 25 kilograms) in the last competition and Brad Martindale produced a record-breaking King George whiting (1110 grams) last week, setting expectations for massive fish at an all-time high.

That said, the remaining cash incentives for extraordinary catches, caught by members on a competition weekend, remain banked.

The first-to-catch prizes of \$1000 remain for the following eligible species equal to or exceeding the nominated weight: King George Whiting (1000 grams), Snapper (10 kilograms), Gummy Shark (20 kilograms) and Kingfish (25 kilograms).

The post-competition presentation started with the celebration of Micha and Riley Goodwin, who were awarded with Squidgie participation medals from the previous season.

The Squidgie Mixed Bag Points competition, for anglers aged nine and under, saw Zachary Gomm rewarded with second place for his King George whiting, totalling 20 points.

First place was awarded to the reigning Squidgie Club Champion, Denver Firth, who was unstoppable and incredibly pleased with his bag of four fish, totalling 75 points.

The Junior Weight and Junior Points competitions were a clean sweep for our inspiring and reigning Junior Club Champion, Heath Womersley, who was a model of consistency presenting a Mackerel of 555 grams and a King George whiting worth 1,456 points (520 grams), respectively.

The Senior Heaviest Weight competitions were won by Pat Gleeson and Carrienne Peatey, weighing in a pair of elusive Snapper of 1570 grams and 385 grams, respectively.

James Nicolaci wrestled with a salmon, worth 2125 points (2125 grams), and Carrienne Peatey coaxed a King George whiting, worth 1008 points



RPIAC Junior Club Champion, Heath Womersley, with a clean sweep of prizes in the Junior Weight and Junior Point competitions.



RPIAC Squidgie Club Champion, Denver Firth, with the Squidgie Mixed Bag prize for his unstoppable performance.

(360 grams), for victory in the Senior Points competitions.

The Senior Shark competition was uncontested, whilst the Secret Weigh prize was awarded to Gary Whybrow, who reluctantly weighed in a 175-gram flathead (secret weight 163 grams) to confirm a life lesson, participation will always lead to success!

RPIAC has been working with Maritime Safety Victoria (MSV), as part of the Transport Safety Victoria (TSV) Float-Safe program.

The pilot life-jacket self-inspection clinic, starting on January 17, will be held next to the RPIAC clubroom, where attendees will learn how to service and maintain their lifejacket.

Pre-registration (via: transportandsafety.vic.gov.au/maritime-safety) is required for the free clinic and attendees will receive a \$30 voucher from a local retailer to go towards a new lifejacket, lifejacket service kit, or other safety equipment.

The next competition will be held over the weekend of February 6 and 7.

For further information about the club, events, competitions, and rules, please visit the website: www.rpiac.com



Micha Goodwin was very pleased to receive his Squidgie participation medal.



Riley Goodwin happily displays his Squidgie participation medal to all attendees

South Gippsland Mid Week Bowls Group

A reminder to all our midweek members, midweek bowls starts again next Thursday, January 14

at Corinella. 10am at venue for 10.30am start. BYO lunch. For more information or to register

please contact Peter McWilliams on 5678 5974. Everyone welcome – see you on the green.

Phillip Island Pony Club – first Rally for 2021

Phillip Island Pony Club loved their Cross Country class at their January 2021 rally with instructor Wendy Christensen, the Club's DC.

It was a full day with groups also doing Show Jumping and Flat Work.

Our riding members range in age from five-years-old to sixteen, however you can be a member of pony club up to the age of twenty-five.

On Sunday, December 6, 2020, Phillip Island and Bass Valley Pony Clubs combined for our Christ-

mas Rally which was held at the Ventnor Reserve.

All riders enjoyed a Navigation Ride around Ventnor, followed by show jumping and games.

Bass Coast Shire Councillor, Michael Whelan and his wife Mary judged the fancy dress which is always a highlight for the kids.

Both clubs have Facebook pages if anyone wants more information.

We are always interested in welcoming new members.



The Judges for the fancy dress, Councillor Michael Whelan and his wife Mary with Charlie and Tatum Hill.



January 2021 Rally (Instructor & DC) and Sarah Eldridge.

Around the Bay

WITH JIM'S BAIT AND TACKLE

Fishing Westernport Bay can be a very different experience to where you would normally fish and those coming from Port Phillip Bay or those who normally fish in the rivers soon learn a few adjustments are needed.

The biggest challenge everybody faces when coming to Westernport is the current and because of this current it throws up a whole other challenge for boaters – wind and tide!

It can be a very safe place to take a boat, despite the fear of running into the mud banks, but don't underestimate what a change in wind or tide can do and how quickly it can go all wrong, offshore especially.

It's a very simple process to stay safe, ask a local. They can give you advice on where and when is the safest for the days weather.

You will also need to learn wind and tide direction and once you master that, there aren't too many days you can't fish somewhere.

Offshore is a totally different situation and the experts that come in from outside the area telling us that they have fished along the east coast in big swell and strong wind very quickly come unstuck in nothing more than a slight breeze from the wrong direction.

You would fit 10 of our swells into one of that from up the east coast where the swell is tall but equally as wide, our swell is very short and sharp.

It's a simple case of respect.

While talking respect we would like to thank all those going to the effort of wearing a mask while in the shop.

Remember it's not our rules but current government regulations that you must wear a mask while indoors.

We still have a few that have no respect for anybody but themselves and I guess you can't and will never change that.

We also have those who want to argue about it, which we aren't interested in and don't really care what you get away with at the place you live.

As I explained to one person who, when asked about a mask said if he has to get a mask we will miss out on a sale.

I would rather miss out on one sale than miss many over 14 days while I was closed and quarantining. To his credit he came back later with a mask on and spent his \$9.50.

Hopefully, this will all be over very soon, and we can get back to some normality but for now the local businesses are very much enjoying the influx of visitors this season.

There have been plenty of fish caught this week from all areas and from people with all levels of experience.

We had some quality reports from the more experienced but then we had some reports equally as good from those who were just starting out and had caught their first ever fish.

Offshore is starting to fire up now the conditions have allowed all boats to be able to get out.

Naturally with more people fishing there is more reports, especially from those fishing land based.

There are a lot more reports from the boats as well but that is expected and the reports from the boats have been reasonably good all year.

Gummies this season have been excellent and there are going to be plenty of freezers with a meal of flake in them.

The reports have come from in the bay and offshore with as many being put back as being caught. The sizes have been good both in the bay and offshore with 10kg nothing too surprising this year.

There are lots of the usual pups around and it's amazing how big a bait they are able to get their mouth around.

Baits have varied and nothing standing out or not working it would seem. If they're hungry and you're in the right spot you have a good chance.

Offshore we have had reports from the Windmills and the Western Entrance while in the bay it has been the channel along French Island, Gardner's to Elizabeth Island, smaller ones across The Corals.

Whiting have played the usual let's go hide when the boat traffic gets busy but come out to feed when it's quiet.

During the middle of the day, we did have a few whiting reports but almost all of them came from the deep water. Shallow water reports were more in the very early morning, late evening, or those days where it was a bit windy and the more experienced know where to fish.

Anywhere you would expect to catch whiting in the shallows was the place to go with reports from all the usual spots.

Deep water whiting reports mostly came from around Rhyll in about 12m. If coming from Newhaven round the top light and head for the end of Tortoise Head until you are almost level with the Rhyll channel in about 12m.

You will need to change up your rig and use a heavier sinker also a slight bait change with a cocktail of squid, pilchard or pippies.

Not too many snapper in the bay but as many pinkies as you want, problem is 99 per cent of them are undersized.

If you persevere you will come across some take home fish but will go through plenty of bait on the way. If you wanted to chase a bigger snapper you will need to head offshore to some of the reefs where several were caught this week.

Offshore I could fill the page with the reports this week: flathead, snapper, schoolies, gummies, tuna, kingfish and more.



Sam with a quality offshore gummy.

Flathead and there are plenty there if you look around, but the size has been a little on the smaller side for the most part.

We did see some very big ones, but they were few and far between with the average closer to mid 30cm. The reports came from almost all along that strip between 30m and 40m from Pyramid to the Windmills, short drifts until you find them then work that area.

Plenty of other fish in the same areas, sand whiting, couta, salmon and mackerel, all bait for your next fishing trip.

We haven't heard of many arrow squid as yet and possibly why we also have heard of makos being caught and only a couple seen.

If you want to try your hand at a 15kg plus gummy head west towards the Windmills, 30m of water and find the wrasse, gummies won't be far away.

We have seen several over the 15kg, some kept some put back, both ways are withing the rules and your choice.

There will always be an argument about if you should keep them at that size and if you purely look at it on keeping the best breeding stock in the water, then the answer is yes. Keep the bigger ones over 15kg and put the 6kg to 10kg back.

Tuna and kingfish, it's amazing how one or two fish become 100's and the fish are everywhere.

Its busier than Bourke Street, one in 20 boats catching them.

The problem is of course will you be the one in 20 next time? The other problem is everybody trying to work out why some are catching them and not others.

The answer is relatively simple, they were luckier than you.

We hear all the stories, you must have this lure, you must have a daisy chain or teaser and so on but for every must we have a story of the complete opposite.

The fish are there, Cape Schanck to Cape Patterson, 20m to 50m seems to be the place and what you really need is time on the water.

Don't expect that you are going to drive out and just scoop them up in a net. You need plenty of fuel and everything else to go your way.

There is plenty that you can do to help your chances: correct lures in the correct places in the set, correct speed for the lures you are using and start with a mixture of colours.

Keep an eye on your sounder, make sure it is

tuned in correctly, track your runs on the GPS. It all looks the same when you are out there. Put some time into bait balls when you find them even if they maybe on the way to your destination. Never drive over fish heading to a spot, they may be the only ones you see for the day.

Lastly good luck tomorrow you might be the one in 20 and it's your turn.

We had 14 tuna and eight kingfish reported for the week.



Logan with one of the tuna caught this week.



PHILLIP ISLAND MARINE

NEW & USED BOAT SALES

TIDE GUIDE

Tidal predictions for Stony Point
Cowes -0.09 Newhaven -0.31

HIGH TIDE IS MARKED IN BOLD

	1.17am	6.45am	12.44pm	6.56pm
Wed 13	2.87m	1.27m	2.46m	0.39m
Thu 14	2.22am	7.57am	1.56pm	8.01pm
	2.97m	1.19m	2.50m	0.36m
Fri 15	3.21am	9.00am	3.01pm	9.00pm
	3.04m	1.07m	2.55m	0.36m
Sat 16	4.14am	9.54am	4.00pm	9.52pm
	3.07m	0.94m	2.60m	0.39m
Sun 17	5.00am	10.42am	4.53pm	10.40pm
	3.06m	0.84m	2.63m	0.46m
Mon 18	5.41am	11.25am	5.41pm	11.24pm
	3.02m	0.76m	2.63m	0.56m
Tue 19	6.15am	12.04pm	6.25pm	
	2.95m	0.70m	2.61m	

All material is supplied in good faith and is believed to be correct. No responsibility or liability for errors or omissions is accepted.

14 Beach Road, Rhyll
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www.phillipislandmarine.com.au

2021 P.I.F.N.C Netball Trials

Phillip Island Football Netball Club 2021 team selection dates for West Gippsland Football League and Casey Netball Association.

Preference is for players to attend both try-out

dates. Please wear plain shorts/pants and white tops (no club apparel).

Please confirm your booking via Try Booking link below <https://www.trybooking.com/BNTTY>

Wednesday 27th January,
PIFNC Courts, Cowes
U11 4:00pm – 4:45 pm;
U13 4.45 – 5.30pm;
U15 5:30pm – 6:30pm;
U17 6:30pm – 7:30pm;

Thursday 28th January,
PIFNC Courts, Cowes
Seniors 6:00pm- 7:30pm

Sunday 31st January,
PIFNC Courts, Cowes
U11 9.00am – 9:45 am;
U13 9:45am – 10:30am;
U15 10.30am – 11.30pm;
U17 12.30pm – 1.30pm;
Seniors 1:30pm - 3:30pm;

Call Nazza O'Brien Netball Operations manager,
on 0404 019 852 or email netball@pifnc.com.au

Age group guidance:
U11 - born 2010 - 2011
U13 - born 2008 - 2009
U15 - born 2006 - 2007
U17 - born 2004 - 2005



PHILLIP ISLAND
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JD000300AA

POSITIONS AVAILABLE

Phillip Island Football Netball Club
are seeking enthusiastic

U18's Football coach
for our 2021 season

Please send applications and enquiries to
scott@phillipislandmarine.com.au



PHILLIP ISLAND
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FOOTBALL & NETBALL CLUB

JD000344AA



The Under 14 Cricket Team (at back from left): Justin Tran, Sam Bennett, Ollie Parsons, George McCausland (captain) Drew Fusinato, Charlie O'Garey, and Ollie Duggan. Front from left: Zac Hughes, Xavier Godena, Duke Lawrence, Harry Arceo and Jake Hughes.

Young Sharks well placed for 2021 Victory!

Under 14s Cricket

For their first game back from the Christmas break, the U14 sharks welcomed Ollie Duggan and Charlie O'Garey to the team.

Duke Lawrence, Ollie Parsons and Zack Hughes were also additions to the team filling in from U12s.

Korumburra won the toss and elected to bat however on the first ball off the match, George McCausland struck, bowling the opener.

Korumburra fought their way back into the match despite tight bowling from Harry Arceo and Sam Bennett.

Justin Tran bowled exceptionally restricting the runs and taking a wicket.

The three U12 boys (Zack, Ollie P, and Duke) were given the task of bowling at the end of the innings.

In Zack's first over, he took a wicket by taking out off stump.

Later in the over, Charlie O'Garey ran out the new batsmen for a diamond duck.

Despite Duke and Ollie P not taking any wickets they restricted lots of runs.

The Sharks kept Korumburra to 52.

Jake Hughes and Ollie Duggan opened the batting, and both looked set for a lot of runs but both were dismissed for three.

Drew Fusinato and George McCausland had a partnership of 48 before George fell to a great catch on 13 runs.

Xavier Godena and Drew Fusinato saw out the rest off the innings, the Sharks leading by 13 leading into next week.

Under 16s Cricket

On a spectacular sun-soaked morning, the under 16s welcomed the 2021 cricket season with a road trip to Nerrena.

In near perfect conditions, Nerrena won the toss and elected to bat.

Opening bowlers Zac Walker and Tim Niven (8 overs 2 maidens 1 for 24) bowled a disciplined line and length, keeping the Nerrena batsmen to just 10 runs from the first 8 overs.

With the score reaching 29, Nerrena lost openers Currato (20) and Trotman (9) to a fantastic leg side catch by keeper Henry Peppard and a sliding catch by Max Arceo respectively.

The Island's opening bowlers did a fantastic job to control the flow of runs, bowling no extras and were well supported by some fantastic ground fielding by the team.

When Captain Kohen Beaumont entered the attack shortly thereafter, he too was able to control the flow of runs.

When Kohen trapped Harris in front for a duck, scoring had stagnated, and Nerrena found them-

selves 3 for 35 after 17 overs.

With the tight bowling and disciplined batting continuing, the game rolled on with a run rate of three runs per over.

William Peppard chipped in with 1 for 9 off 5 overs and Captain Kohen Beaumont had the best figures of the day taking 2 for 12 off 7 overs.

Nerrena's Tadgh Gannon was the pick of the batsmen.

Showing great maturity, Gannon weathered the tight bowling storm and found a way to accelerate his innings, when others were unable to do so.

He ended up with a well-made and much needed 42 from Nerrena's perspective.

All in all, a pleasing day's cricket played with intensity and in the right spirit.

The Sharks have placed themselves in a strong position to get their first win of 2021.



New recruits for under 14s - Charlie O'Garey (left) and Ollie Duggan line up on Saturday at the Cowes oval.

Phillip Island golf results

Tuesday January 5 - Men's 18 Hole Stableford.

Winner was Stuart Carson H/c (10) with 39 points from Paul Cochrane H/c (5) with 38 points.

Ladies 18 Hole Stableford.

Winner was Janice Baker H/c (36) with 38 points from Alice Schofield H/c (26) with 36 points.

Saturday January 9 - Men's 18 Hole Stroke.

Winner was James Taylor H/c (26) with 64 points from Isacc Batty H/c (2) with 69 points.

Next Saturday's Men's Competition - Match Play Qualification.

Ladies 18 Hole Stroke

Winner was Ashlee Robinson H/c (45) with 73 points from Joanne Disher H/c (23) with 74 points.

Men's & Ladies 9 Hole Stableford.

Winner was Charlene Duthie H/c (39) with 20 points on a

countback from Basil Moloney H/c (14) also with 20 points.

A reminder to all members to collect their Raffle Tickets from the Golf Shop to sell to support the upcoming Lighter Moments - Bass Coast and Phillip Island Exhibition - held at the Iluka Gallery in Silverleaves.

Three of the paintings on display are donated to the Phillip Island Golf Club and can be currently viewed in the Clubhouse.

Artists donating paintings are David Taylor - A.W.I.F.V.A.S., Diana Edwards - A.G.R.A and Tom Tyrrell.

Tickets are \$5 each or 3 for \$10. The exhibition is for the month of January and will be drawn Sunday January 31 at 3pm at the Gallery. Iluka Studio Gallery, 28 Settlement Road Silverleaves, Phillip Island.

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