



PHILLIP ISLAND & SAN REMO

# ADVERTISER

YOUR COMMUNITY VOICE!

Wednesday, January 8, 2025

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**WHAT A SCORCHER!** The high temperatures over the weekend saw thousands flocking to local beaches. The Cowes foreshore beach was a sea of sunshades, with families enjoying the calm waters and escaping the heat. The weekend's temperatures were almost 10 degrees higher than the mean maximum temperature for Phillip Island recorded by the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM). However, according to BOM records, the highest January temperature for the island was 40.2 degrees Celsius, recorded on January 13, 2016.

## Erosion protestors demand funding

### SILVERLEAVES

The "alarming rate" of erosion at Silverleaves was a "test case" for all of coastal Victoria, requiring urgent government funding, hundreds of protestors were told on Monday.

More than 200 protestors gathered at the "red zone" beach section of Sanders Road to hear speakers call on the State Gov-

ernment "to fund emergency works to save our homes from being washed away".

Resident Natalie Gray told the crowd the risk was "immediate".

"I am afraid when sleeping in my bed at night during a storm, when I can hear and see the waves, held back by a metre of sand and hear the crash as banksias fall, hopeful-

ly away from my house," Natalie said.

Natalie called on the State Government to fund a "shovel ready" sandbag wall "to protect homes before the king tides at Easter" and said the state had failed to maintain groynes to protect the beach.

"Yet the state has approved new infrastructure – the most recent (the Coghlan Road to

Rose Avenue) rock wall – which has exacerbated erosion," she added.

As reported, the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) have proposed a sandbag wall costing up to \$500,000 as an interim measure to stop further erosion, but funding has yet to be made available.

Continued page 8



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14 27	16 28	18 28	18 29	19 27	18 22	18 21

A stunning nighttime display

Fireworks weren't the only stunning display heralding the start of 2025. On January 2, local photographer Anna Carson captured this Aurora from Kilcunda at 1.38am.

The Block winner announced

REALITY TV

A 34-year-old Ballarat healthcare worker has won the LMCT+ Block Island draw, opting for the \$8 million in cash rather than the Block resort on Phillip Island.

Well-known figure on The Block, Adrian Portelli forked out more than \$15 million on November 9 to secure the entire property from the 2024 season of the reality TV show, with all five houses then listed on his LMCT+ website.

The website sold tickets in a giveaway for the public to have a chance to win, with entries meant to close on December 26, but delayed until December 27 after being halted by technical issues, live in front of 111,000 viewers on Facebook.

The eventual winner was named as 34-year-old Ballarat resident Holly, with confetti raining on Mr Portelli and The Block 2024 winners Maddy and Charlotte.

A stunned Holly told Mr Portelli "oh my God, no f\*\*ing way. I didn't watch the live draw on purpose because I thought it would be bad luck".

She said she would take the night to figure out whether she would opt for the houses or the cash, with an announcement then made on LMCT+ Instagram that she had opted for the cash.

"Thank you Adrian, I can't put into words how much this means to me," Holly wrote on Instagram.

The decision means Mr Portelli retains The Block houses on Phillip Island.

According to an ABC news report last year, Mr Portelli and his company, Xclusive Tech Pty Ltd, face 19 charges of person conducting/assist in the conduct of an unlawful lottery in South Australia.

The charges range in date from January 2023 to May 2024, with Xclusive Tech charged over several lotteries that offered properties from The Block as a major prize.

Under South Australia's Lotteries Act 2019, any lottery not licensed in the state is unlawful, with organisers facing a maximum penalty of \$10,000.

Mr Portelli is due to face court on January 15.

POLICE BRIEFS

New Year's Eve

There were no arrests or significant incidents to report for New Year's Eve on the island. Police reported overall crowd behaviour was generally good.

As part of the extra resources allocated to Bass Coast, the Mounted Branch came to assist in Cowes.

There were multiple reports of illegal fireworks, but police said there were no ongoing investigations.

Newhaven accident

A four-car accident near the Chocolate Factory and the Visitor Information Centre in Newhaven on Sunday saw long traffic delays, with the bridge closed for around an hour as police and emergency services cleared the scene.

Police said there were no serious injuries. The accident occurred around 12.30pm, and several hours later there were still long delays in the area.

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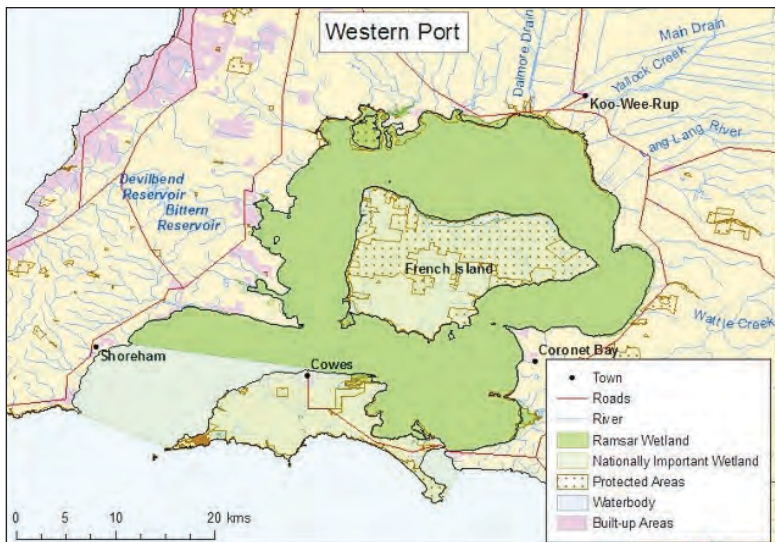
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The area in darker green shows Western Port is a protected Ramsar area, one of about 60 in Australia given international protection. Just as one hydrogen facility looks set to fail, another has reared its head.

## New hydrogen plant proposed for Western Port

### INDUSTRY

The Victorian Government has failed to provide sufficient information on a proposed hydrogen production facility on Western Port.

The new project comes after plans to build the world's largest hydrogen demonstration project, in Western Port, appeared to collapse at the end of last year.

Now the Victorian Planning Minister has received a request from Spiire, on behalf of Energys Australia, to develop hydrogen production at the Port of Hastings.

Late last year the Minister released basic details about the proposal, with public comment running from November 20 to December 20, with an assessment and decision expected early in 2025.

Western Port Biosphere Foundation CEO Mel Barker wrote a submission calling for better community consultation about the nature and scale of the project, adding the details released do "not provide a clear overview" of the proposal.

"There has been no prior consultation with the local community, nor other local businesses and industrial organisations, to inform them about the project and to provide the context," Ms Barker wrote.

"This makes it challenging to provide informed comment.

"The [engage.vic.gov.au](https://engage.vic.gov.au) website is only monitored by a very limited segment of the community, so if this is used as the only consultation vehicle, it is very

unlikely to provide any useful insight into the views of the local community."

Ms Barker said she understood there would be no further approvals required.

"Given the highly flammable nature of hydrogen, and the proximity of the proposed production facility to other industrial sites and the Ramsar-listed Western Port, we request the community is provided with information as to how the environmental and safety risks of the operation will be managed."

She said Western Port was a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve "in recognition of the international environmental significance of the area".

"The proposed project is in very close proximity to Western Port, the core of the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve and an internationally protected Ramsar-listed wetland."

Ms Barker also called for clarification on the relationship with this new proposal and the Hydrogen Energy Supply Chain (HESC) project.

Starting in March 2021, the HESC was to turn Latrobe Valley brown coal into hydrogen, with the cooled volatile gas piped more than 150km to the Port of Hastings and shipped on the specially-built Suiso Frontier to Japan by Kawasaki Heavy Industries.

However, at the end of last year Japanese news outlet Nikkei reported Kawasaki Heavy Industries had withdrawn from the trial, because it had become "difficult to procure hydrogen in Australia within the deadline".

## Local surfers to the rescue... again

### BEACH SAFETY

Local surfers Abbey Clarke and Niamh Moore rescued a couple who had drifted out to sea at YCW beach, around 1.30pm on Saturday, January 4.

The pair were giving a lesson with the Girls on Board surf school, when they were approached by a young girl concerned about her parents in the water. The 12-year-old had done a lesson with Girls on Board a few days before.

"In the lesson, we talked about the rips and what to do," Abbey said, congratulating the young girl on raising the alarm.

Initially they couldn't spot the pair, and just grabbed two of the surf school's big foam boards and started paddling.

"We headed out the back and looked for the people who were furthest out."

Shortly after, the girls spotted the parents in the water. A surfer had already reached them, but with just a short board Abbey said there was no way he would have been able to get the two adults into shore.

"When I paddled up, I said hi, I'm Abbey, you're going to be alright. We're here to help."

A member of the Woolamai Beach Surf Life Saving Club for two years, an avid surfer, and about to start Year 11 at Bass Coast College, Abbey said this was her first "real life" rescue.

"I love the water and feel super comfortable in it, so I'm always happy to jump in."

She said because the parents had remained calm, the situation was easier to manage.

"They were just out swimming and then couldn't get back in. They did the right thing. They were just floating and not panicking."

Abbey put the woman on her board, while Niamh gave her board to the man, and the two surfers then guided the pair back to the beach.

"She gave me a big hug when we got her back on the shore," Abbey said.

### Life saving

This is not the first major rescue Niamh has been involved in.

In February last year, along with local surfer Leigh Conway, Niamh helped rescue a family of three at Smiths Beach, including a three-year-old baby, who were being swept out to sea.

Like Abbey, Niamh is a trained surf instructor and life saver.

Last year she told the Advertiser her life saving training flooded



Surfer Abbey Clarke helped rescue two swimmers who had drifted out to sea at YCW beach on the weekend. Photo: Jo O'Reilly-Stubbs.



Niamh Moore, who helped rescue a family of three in February last year, teamed up with fellow surfer Abbey Clarke to rescue two swimmers who had drifted out to sea at YCW beach on the weekend.

back in during the "intense five minutes".

"I don't want to be seen as a hero. I was just in the right place at the right time with the right set of skills."

At the time, Niamh stated it needed "to be drummed into people how dangerous it can be" in the surf, particularly for those not familiar with local conditions.

One year on, the warnings remain the same.

This summer, there has been an extensive beach safety campaign, coordinated by Surf Life

Saving Victoria, Bass Coast Shire Council, Phillip Island Nature Parks and Parks Victoria.

The campaign urges people to only swim at patrolled beaches and to download the beachsafe app to get updates on local conditions. There are three patrolled beaches on Phillip Island: Woolamai, Smiths Beach and Cowes.

Abbey said just before the incident on Saturday, she and Niamh had been discussing how often people needed to be rescued, after friends rescued two girls at Smiths Beach on Friday.



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# OUR BUMPER ANNUAL SUMMER QUIZ

**1.** The bush stone-curlew once called Phillip Island home, before becoming extinct in the 1970s due to foxes. The critically-endangered bird was released into Oswin Roberts Reserve in 2024 as part of a breeding program. How many of the birds were released? And bonus points: how many of the species are roughly believed to exist in the wild in Victoria?

**2.** Name the buyer of all five houses on The Block, the reality TV renovation show filmed on Phillip Island this year.

**3.** A report was released last year that detailed the amount of foreshore eroded in a “hotspot” zone of Silverleaves, near Sanders Road. How many metres of foreshore reserve has been lost in this area?

**4.** Bass Coast Shire council elections were held in November. Who are the three Island Ward councillors?

**5.** The Phillip Island Community and Learning Centre (PICAL) dodged imminent liquidation this year after inadvertently failing to pay all staff wages to award requirements. When did the neighbourhood house open in Cowes?

## 6. Western Port's marine environment is protected

under an international treaty. What is the name of that treaty?

**7.** Name the State Government project proposed for Western Port, which was rejected by the Federal Environment Minister last year, but has more recently been given a second life?

**8.** What is the name of the Phillip Island charity set up after Samantha Fraser was murdered by her estranged husband in 2018, which works to stop family violence?

**9.** Cowes' new cultural centre is called Bernin-neit. What does the name mean?

**10.** What year was the current Phillip Island bridge opened?

**11.** What will start building this year at 9-10 The Esplanade Cowes? And bonus points, how much is the current construction cost?

**12.** How much is the State Government mandated cap on rates' bills for 24/25? And bonus question: how much is the real increase to rates including the garbage cost?

**13.** What will be built at 24 Churchill Road, Newhaven?

**14.** Oystering was the first commercial fishery to be developed in Western Port. When did it start and for bonus points what were the oysters first used for?

**15.** Each year the Victorian Conservation Regulator issues permits to cull wildlife around Victoria, including on Phillip Island. How many permits were issued for Phillip Island in the past year?

**16.** At a rough guess, how many jobs does tourism provide regionally? And how much of Bass Coast's gross regional product does tourism contribute?

**17.** Phillip Island is Bass Coast Shire's car crash hotspot, crash analysis shows. How many fatalities as a percentage does the island account for?

**18.** When does the current contract for the Phillip Island MotoGP expire? And bonus question: is the next contract secured?

**19.** According to scientists and ecologists, what is causing the dieback of Phillip Island trees, particularly eucalyptus?

**20.** How many people live in Bass Coast Shire, roughly? What is the biggest demographic group, by age? And what is Phillip Island's population?



18. The contract for the Australian Motorcycle Grand Prix runs until 2026. The new contract is yet to be confirmed or signed.

19. According to an international-ly recognised arboriculturist, a tree is stressed, often caused by lack of water and climate changes. Phillip Island Landcare has surveyed local trees, with results inconclusive but pointing to a range of stressors including salinity, fungus, nutrient imbalance, soil acidification, insects, machinery and chemical damage.

20. Bass Coast Shire's population is 42,729 (as of June 2023), of which 18 per cent are aged 60-69. Phillip Island has a rough population of about 13,500.

**16.** Tourism provides just over 30 per cent of direct regional jobs and contributes 18.5 per cent of gross regional product for Bass Coast. The three largest industries in Bass Coast are health care and social assistance, construction and retail.

**17.** Car crash analysis data across Bass Coast for the last five years shows of all car accidents resulting in a serious injury in the shire, almost 30 per cent occurred on Phillip Island, while 50 per cent of the shire's car accident fatalities occurred

A green bin overflowing with food scraps like banana peels, apple cores, and vegetable pieces, with more scraps spilling out. To the right, text reads: "All food scraps go in your green Organics bin". At the bottom left is a QR code and the text "Visit basscoast.vic.gov.au/whichbin to find out more". At the bottom right is the Bass Coast logo.

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A.F.D.A.





Andrew Lerk with the little penguin that he and fellow sea kayaker Greg Spiller rescued near the Sea Caves at Cape Woolamai. Unfortunately, Nature Parks staff were not able to save the penguin, which they said was extremely malnourished.

# Kayaking trip becomes a rescue mission

## WILDLIFE

A morning paddle by two ocean kayakers turned into a rescue mission when the pair spotted an injured penguin near the Sea Caves at Cape Woolamai.

Greg Spiller and Andrew Lerk are members of the Victorian Sea Kayaking Club and last Monday headed out from Cleeland Bight to paddle around the Cape.

Andrew and Greg said they spotted the penguin swimming around the rocks, and noticed it wasn't diving under the waves.

"We see a lot of penguins out there, but they're shy and usually duck under the water and escape," Greg explained.

"This little guy couldn't dive, so Andrew and I corralled it and put it in the kayak."

Andrew said they didn't want to leave the injured penguin out there, and it clearly wasn't in good health.

"When we got hold of it, it tried to bite me, but didn't have much of a go."

Once the pair paddled back around the Cape and got phone coverage, they rang Parks Victoria and were told to take the penguin to the Koala Conservation Reserve.

Greg then phoned his wife and asked her to meet them at Cleeland Bight, to transport the injured penguin.

Greg said by the time they made it back to shore, his two kids Ollie (10) and Sunday (8) were waiting, with towels and a cooler bag to collect the penguin.

"The kids named it Waffles on the way to the conservation centre. They dropped it off and the Nature Parks took over from there."

The little penguin was transported to the Wildlife Rehabilitation Hospital at the Penguin Parade, but unfortunately did not survive.

"It had a large wound on its back and was extremely malnourished, so it had been struggling for quite a while," a Nature Parks spokesperson said.

"Nature Parks provided intensive care to the penguin on entry into the Wildlife Rehabili-



Greg Spiller's children, Sunday and Ollie were waiting at Cape Woolamai to help transport the injured penguin to the Koala Conservation Reserve.

tation Centre but it succumbed to its injuries the next day."

Greg said Ollie and Sunday were sad to hear Nature Parks staff hadn't been able to save Waffles, but as keen travellers and campers, they understood sometimes wildlife injuries can't be fixed.

"They know that we tried our best."

The family are regular visitors to the island, staying with relatives in Cape Woolamai.

"I love this area and come down whenever I can," Greg said.

As a regular kayaker, Greg said it was not uncommon to see penguins out in the water.

"We often see them in Western Port in the bay area and right out in the ocean, but not usually that close to the shoreline."

"First you hear them beeping, and if you go towards them, they get out of the way very quickly."

He and Andrew have also

spotted dolphins, seals, and birds on their trips, and whales during the migration season.

"When the whales come through, they chase the schools of fish and that brings other animals as well," Greg said.

"I've seen Orcas, maybe three times in the last ten years, and the occasional shark at the surf break on the San Remo bar."

To report sick, injured or orphaned wildlife, call Wildlife Victoria's Emergency Response Service on 03 8400 7300 available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Sick or injured wildlife can be taken to the Koala Conservation Reserve between 10am and 4pm daily or to the Penguin Parade Visitor Centre from 4pm until closing time (about two hours after sunset) or to a local vet before 5.30pm.

[www.penguins.org.au/conservation/wildlife-response/](http://www.penguins.org.au/conservation/wildlife-response/)



In March the National Vietnam Veterans Museum is hosting an event to mark the 50 year anniversary of the end of the Vietnam War. From left: Nicky Chung (CEO AVWA), Phil Dressing (NVVM Board), John Methven OAM (NVVM Founder), Bass Coast Mayor Cr Rochelle Halstead and front, Neville Goodwin OAM (NVVM Board).

# Fifty years since end of Vietnam War

## EVENT

The National Vietnam Veterans Museum is hosting an event to mark the 50-year anniversary of the end of the Vietnam War.

The milestone holds deep significance for many Australian Vietnamese, said Nicky Chung, CEO of the Australian Vietnamese Women's Association (AVWA).

"This period may bring forth a range of emotions, as it serves as a poignant reminder of loss and displacement," Ms Chung said.

"To honour this significant anniversary, the National Vietnam Veterans Museum (NVVM) on Phillip Island is collaborating with the Vietnamese community to commemorate this period in a meaningful way."

John Methven, the founder of the NVVM, along with the Board and staff, is working closely with the AVWA to ensure the anniversary is marked with respect and sensitivity.

Their goal is to aid in the healing process for Vietnamese refugees who began arriving in Australia 50 years ago, as well as for the Vietnam Veterans who served during the war.

Ms Chung is a resident of Wonthaggi, an active community member and a former refugee herself.

"As a boat person who arrived in Australia shortly after the war, I am deeply thankful to be in this wonderful country. We hold the service of Australian Veterans in our hearts."

## Thrive 2025

In March next year, the NVVM will host a significant event at their Newhaven premises.

Entitled "Thrive 2025", the event is expected to draw hundreds of Veterans, members of the Vietnamese community, and state and federal parliamentarians from all parties.

The event will highlight the journey of the Vietnamese community from their humble beginnings to becoming an integral part of Victoria and Australia's vibrant fabric.

John Methven emphasised the importance of this commemoration.

"It is crucial to remember, interpret, and understand the Australian Veteran experiences of the Vietnam War," John said.

"Commemorating the end of the war through the eyes of the Australian Vietnamese community is extraordinary. We are witnessing their overwhelming gratitude and their resilience in overcoming the hardships of leaving family behind for a better life."

Jordan Crugnale, State Member for Bass, expressed her support for the event.

"This is such an important and unifying event to be held right here in our region that is imbued with so much meaning for everyone involved."

"It is also an honour to be contributing through our Victoria Remembers Grant Program." The event has also attracted additional funding through the State Government's 2024-25 Regional Multicultural Festivals and Events Fund," Ms Crugnale said.

"This milestone event is a chance to celebrate the remarkable contributions of Vietnamese Australians to our society while honouring the profound connection between Vietnamese Australians and Australian Vietnam Veterans."

Bass Coast Shire Council is also supporting the event.

"We are excited to welcome Thrive 2025 to Phillip Island," Bass Coast Mayor Cr Rochelle Halstead said.

"This event will strengthen our local community by offering cultural and educational activities that encourage dialogue, celebrate resilience, promote inclusivity, and honour our shared heritage."

The event will feature a full program of activities leading up to March 1 including a writing competition to engage the generations.

The event will include cultural performances and share success stories of Australian Vietnamese individuals. Additionally, there will be stories from Australians who served in Vietnam, providing a platform for shared experiences and mutual understanding.

This commemoration aims to honour the past while fostering a sense of unity and healing within the community.

Any enquiries about the event may be directed to Nicky Chung. Email [ceo@avwa.org.au](mailto:ceo@avwa.org.au), or call 0475 871 589.



# Response praised at Cowes collision

## TRAFFIC

There were no road fatalities on Phillip Island over the busy Christmas and New Year period.

There were a number of incidents which added to the road congestion including a four car collision on January 5 (see police update).

The most serious accident was a two-car collision in Cowes at 11am on December 30, which saw five people taken to hospital.

Police are still investigating the incident but believe a driver in an MG sedan, travelling north along Thompson Avenue struck a stationary Holden Commodore station wagon in front of it. "Subsequently, the MG struck two female pedestrians walking along The Esplanade," the police stated.

Emergency services and paramedics were quickly on the scene and Ambulance Victoria confirmed five people were transported to hospital in a stable condition, and no injuries were life-threatening.

"A woman in her 70s was airlifted to The Royal Melbourne Hospital in a stable condition with upper body injuries," Ambulance Victoria's media spokesperson confirmed.

"A child and a teenager were transported by road to Monash Medical Centre, both in a stable



A two-car collision in Cowes at 11am on December 30 saw five people taken to hospital, with the busy intersection blocked to traffic.

condition with upper and lower body injuries."

A man in his 80s and a man in his 30s, both with upper body injuries were taken to Wonthaggi Hospital.

The area was blocked off to traffic, with emergency workers and passers-by assisting with the injured.

Anyone with information or dashcam/CCTV footage is urged to contact Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000 or submit a confidential report online at [www.crimestoppersvic.com.au](http://www.crimestoppersvic.com.au)

## Help

Jim Vlachos, the father of the two young girls involved in the incident, took to social media to express his thanks.

"Our daughters Mia and So-

phia were crossing the street whilst given way by a waiting car, which was then rear ended at speed (by the MG), collecting Mia and catapulting Sophia and then catching her under the car ... quite a miracle they are alive," Jim said.

"The help and support received by the public, police, ambos and surrounding businesses was nothing short of outstanding."

Jim made special mention of Shona, who he said "managed me and more importantly our girls with patience and care".

He thanked everyone on the scene who helped after the accident, describing them as a "great bunch of people", with a shout out to the Monash Medical emergency department and "the life-savers down (on) the island who assisted with everyone injured."

# Campaign turns up the volume

## FEDERAL ELECTION

Deb Leonard, independent Candidate for Monash has kicked off her 2025 campaign for the federal election, which is expected to be held by May 17 this year.

Last Friday commuters across the Phillip Island bridge were greeted by volunteers waving Deb Leonard campaign signs and encouraging honks.

Young volunteers Ollie and Sunny counted 233 honks of support and said "it was so exciting when people honked and waved!"

Deb said this was one of over 40 campaign events planned for January, with doorknocking taking place regularly around the electorate, as well as market stalls, "Politics in the Pub" events and an online meet the candidate session.

"The major parties have been ignoring our region for decades" Deb asserted.

"I'm making it a priority to hear from as many people as possible from communities around the electorate to understand where we need action."

Deb uploads all the feedback she receives to her website, and said this will be used to shape her policies.

Roads, coastal erosion and access to health services are the top local issues for Bass Coast, according to Deb.

Nationally, issues of cost of liv-



Volunteers waving Deb Leonard campaign signs and encouraging honks were on the Phillip Island bridge last Friday, kicking off the 2025 leg of the independent's campaign for Monash in the upcoming federal election.

ing, housing, climate action, and political integrity remain critical.

"The major parties talk about addressing these things, but we are yet to see any meaningful action," Deb said.

"As an independent I'll hold the parties to account, make sure they deliver on promises, and ensure we get our fair share of federal funding for roads, health services and infrastructure.

"This is a community campaign," Deb stated.

"It's not about me; it's about community standing up and demanding better."

Deb encourages anyone interested to get involved by visiting her website: [debleonard.com.au](http://debleonard.com.au)

# STAY SAFE IN BASS COAST

As we enjoy more beautiful weather, the Bass Coast region is calling all beachgoers to come and enjoy the sandy shores safely.

To help you stay safe, we encourage everyone to **download the Surf Life Saving Australia, Beachsafe app** and access important information available on the Life Saving Victoria website ([lsv.com.au](http://lsv.com.au)) and throughout the Visitor Information Centres.



**[beachsafe.org.au](http://beachsafe.org.au)**

Always swim at patrolled locations whenever possible, and in hot weather, take steps to protect yourself and others by keeping cool, staying hydrated, planning ahead and checking in with others.

**We want everyone to keep safe when exploring the amazing coastline of Bass Coast.**





# Critics mount on State Government's DAL fail

## PLANNING

The State Government is under increasing pressure to approve the Distinctive Areas and Landscapes (DAL) project, with a high-profile group describing the delay as “compromising” and “disrespectful”.

As reported, in November the Victorian Planning Minister Sonya Kilkenney again – for the fourth time – extended the deadline for finalising the long-anticipated DAL, a move described by local planning observers as “farcical”.

Then a former Tourism Victoria CEO and former chair of Phillip Island Nature Parks late last year called on the State Government to fulfill its election promise, freeze Phillip Island's town boundaries and finalise the DAL.

Now the Victorian National Trust has come out swinging, writing a letter to Ms Kilkenney urging her to finalise the DAL and “provide the region with the highest level of planning protection”, to “protect distinctive areas and maintain strict town boundaries”.

Victorian National Trust Bass Coast branch president Ross Lloyd wrote the group made a submission to the government's DAL public panel hearings in April 2023, after which the panel submitted a report to the minister in June 2023.

“We believe it is unsatisfactory to have the Bass Coast DAL unresolved for so long with rezonings and other planning decisions being made in the meantime,” Mr Lloyd writes to Ms Kilkenney, in the letter which has been approved by the Victorian

National Trust.

“Some findings ... could even be obsolete by the time the process concludes.”

“We also find it disrespectful that the public, with extensive preparation and time taken to attend hearings, has still not seen the report after this extended period.”

Mr Loyd said the two-year delay could “potentially compromise” Phillip Island planning, which “can contribute to uncertain and inconsistent outcomes”.

He called on the Minister to provide “assurance the government remains committed” to endorsing the DAL and “strong planning protections for the Bass Coast region”.

## Critics

The National Trust rebuke comes after former Tourism Victoria CEO Jeff Floyd, who is also a former CEO and chair of Parks Victoria and former CEO of AAA Tourism, called on Ms Kilkenney to protect “rural and environmental values” and finally approve the DAL.

“On November 3, 2018 the then Premier Daniel Andrews made the following commitment: ‘If re-elected, we will implement the strongest planning protections that Phillip Island and the Bass Coast have ever received – permanent town boundaries and tough rules that can only be changed by a majority of both houses of Parliament, not by Cabinet or Council,’” Mr Floyd said.

“So, here we are six years’ on and Premier Andrews’ unequivocal commitment has still



A high-profile critic of the government fears pressure from developers and housing lobbies has delayed the final Distinctive Areas and Landscapes (DAL) project. Developers are hoping to get the green light for vast new housing developments at Cape Woolamai's airport land, Newhaven West, Smiths Beach, Ventnor and San Remo.

not been honoured by the government.

“I get that there is pressure from the developer and housing lobbies Minister Kilkenney, but you need to show some leadership and get this done.”

Mr Floyd writes freezing the town boundaries on Phillip Island would give farmers a “secure future” and ensure “environmental values underpin our economic wellbeing”.

“Six years is long enough; we need a decision now.”

The DAL's final hurdle, the Statement of Planning Policy (SPP) was expected in 2023 but was extended to October 2024.

But late last year, Member for Bass Jordan Crugnale MP confirmed the draft SPP had again been given an extension, despite in October saying details would be finalised by November, when

it was to be endorsed by public entities such as Bass Coast Shire Council, with the final public SPP expected by April 2025.

Ms Kilkenney at the end of last year was also made Victoria's Attorney-General, with concerns by critics her two major portfolios will see her focus thinly-spread.

## Boundaries

In an historic first, the Phillip Island Conservation Society last year joined with Island Voice to oppose the expansion of town boundaries across the island and San Remo.

The two groups – who have not always been like-minded – released a joint statement ahead of the council election, also sending a clear message to the State Government.

Last year all Island Ward

councillors were elected on platforms supporting locking in Phillip Island's town boundaries.

Long-term planning observers described last year's DAL planning panel hearing as a developers' “picnic” and a “forum to expand town boundaries”, with proposals including:

- The 48ha Phillip Island airfield site (owned by Glen Waverley Real Estate);
- 34ha adjoining Smiths Beach to the east of the current hamlet: “in our view it is a logical inclusion within the Smiths Beach settlement boundary”, according to the lawyers representing the developer;
- Lawyers for landowners from Potters Hill Road to Punchbowl Road argued this area should be included in the proposed town boundaries, this included land owned by the Chinese-backed Springway Corporate Group;
- The controversial 24-hectare land (also owned by Springway Corporate Group) in Ventnor is also proposed for subdivision under the DAL. A decade ago the land embroiled former state Liberal leader Matthew Guy in an imbroglio that resulted in a confidential taxpayer funded settlement said to be worth \$3 million;
- The town boundary for Newhaven currently ends at Boys Home Road, but landowners are seeking to rezone for future subdivision of their land behind Panny Letchumanan's Chocolate Factory down to the water's edge overlooking Churchill Island, to be called Newhaven West.

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# Erosion protestors demand funding

From page 1

## Test case

Victorian shadow regional development minister Melina Bath told the crowd Silverleaves was a “test case” for coastal Victoria.

“Houses here will go under unless the State Government funds urgent emergency works,” Melina said.

Shadow water minister Tim McCurdy said the “issue is environmental but the solution is political”, adding the sandbag wall was equivalent to “half an hour of State Government interest payments”.

Melina moved two motions – unanimously supported by the protestors – that:

- “Silverleaves community calls on the State Government to immediately fund urgent mitigation works to save Silverleaves from coastal erosion and save houses;
- “The State Government work collaboratively with the community in consulting for a long-term, sustainable solution to save this area, including hard infrastructure as required”.

State MP for Bass Jordan Crugnale was unable to attend the rally but told the Advertiser she was working with the Environment Minister and the new Treasurer on funding the sandbag wall.

Jordan said the Federal Emergency Management Minister Jenny McAllister had advised that DEECA and council could meet criteria for this year’s disaster funding.

Bass Coast Shire mayor Rochelle Halstead told the crowd



Hundreds of people gathered in the hot spot erosion zone of Silverleaves, despite the rain, at the protest on Monday that demanded funding for a sandbag wall. More photos at [pisra.com.au](http://pisra.com.au)

the new council “strongly supported” lobbying the State Government for funding.

At the end of December Bass Coast Shire councillors voted to meet with the Victorian Environment Minister to lobby for urgent funding.

## Residents

Among the protestors were foreshore residents who predicted

their properties would be inundated this year from a king tide storm surge.

“It’s not solely climate change. What we are seeing here is mismanagement by government and council in building the rock wall to the west,” Silverleaves resident Tristan White said.

“We’ve had three years of significant erosion and we are not far off being inundated. It will

happen in the next storm season.”

Tristan added there was also a threat of trees falling on visitors during the summer holidays.

Resident Eddie said he has owned his house for 17 years and it was “mindboggling” the amount of erosion that had occurred, especially in recent years.

“We understand why the rock wall was built, it had to go in, the issue is the impact after it

was built,” Eddie said.

“Over 17 years there’s been erosion but not as devastating as this. It’s mindboggling.”

Natalie said the sandbag wall was shovel ready, yet the state was “not prepared to act, putting the community at risk”.

She has previously told the Advertiser she was prepared to take legal action, including challenging rates and land tax with the Victorian Valuer General.

Natalie – who works in town planning and regularly litigates on behalf of clients – has even hinted a class action and civil proceedings against the State Government and the shire could be an option because erosion accelerated after the rock wall was built.

Last year DEECA released a long-awaited report – Observation Point to Silverleaves: Gippsland West Coastal Processes Studies – which states in two years, since 2022, in the “hotspot” near Sanders Road, about 16 metres of foreshore has been lost to erosion.

The western shoreline of Silverleaves more broadly has eroded about 77 metres since 1953.

The report suggests sea level rise is coming faster than previously predicted, with the foreshore shifting to the front door of the most northerly homes along the length of Silverleaves within the next decade if nothing is done to stop current erosion.

By 2050 all frontline homes along Silverleaves may be submerged and by 2100 homes about 150 metres from the current shoreline could have been breached.

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**24 MCRAE AVENUE, COWES**


- Absolute foreshore reserve frontage with water views and sandy walking track to beach
  - Open plan living upstairs leading to huge entertainer's deck
  - 4 beds/2 baths/lock up garage
- \$1,650,000**

**26 LOCK ROAD, RHYLL**


- Situated on approx. 1840m<sup>2</sup> of land in the quiet township of Rhyll, close to the General Store and only moments away from the waters' edge
  - Generous open plan living leading to undercover rear deck
  - 4 bedrooms/2 bathrooms
- \$1,100,000**

**18 KING STREET, VENTNOR**


- Beautiful double storey home with open plan living upstairs and self-contained area downstairs
  - Large undercover deck area, stunning Jarrah flooring, woodfire and established gardens situated on a 604m<sup>2</sup> (approx.) allotment
  - 3 bedrooms/3 bathrooms/5 car carport
- \$949,000**

**69 WYNDHAM AVENUE, COWES**


- Open plan light filled living with vaulted ceilings and covered rear deck situated on 795m<sup>2</sup> block
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**92 MCFEES ROAD, RHYLL**


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**1/3 BENAMBRA COURT, COWES**


- Stunning townhouse with a Japanese inspired feel positioned close to the heart of Cowes
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  - 3 bedrooms/1 bathroom/2 cars
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**20 SANDERS ROAD, SILVERLEAVES**


- Spacious home offering 2 living areas, floorboards, energy efficient solar panels, rear covered deck, double lock up garage with side roller door
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- \$969,000**

**1/2-4 WARLEY AVENUE, COWES**


- Amazing location – just steps from The Esplanade, beach, restaurants and shops
  - Light and bright open plan living leading to outdoor alfresco area
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- \$620,000**

**11 BOWMAN ROAD, WIMBLEDON HEIGHTS**


- Spacious corner allotment with convenient side access for caravan/boat parking
  - Generous open living leading to undercover deck
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- Modern single level home in Seagrove Estate with contemporary open plan living
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**29 HAPPY VALLEY DRIVE, SUNSET STRIP**


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**3553 BASS HIGHWAY, KILCUNDA**


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**35 BONWICK AVENUE, SAN REMO**


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**5 PIANO STREET, CORINELLA**


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  - Versatile living spaces, office/study, undercover deck area
  - 3 bedrooms/2 bathrooms/2 cars
- \$685,000**

**58 GELLIBRAND STREET, CORONET BAY**


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WESTERN PORT BAY

Phillip Island map with numbered locations 1-20.

**VENTNOR RD**, **BACK BEACH RD**, **PHILLIP RD**, **ISLAND RD**, **PHILLIP ISLAND RD**

**Wimbledon Heights**, **SilverLeaves**, **Rhyll**, **Smith Beach**, **Sunderland Bay**, **Surf Beach**, **Surfies Point**, **Newhaven**, **San Remo**, **Cape Woolamai**

**THE NOBBIES CENTER**, **PENGUIN PARADE**, **Seal Rock**, **Black Rock**, **Pyramid Rock**, **Forrest Caves**, **The Colonnades**, **Woolamai Surf Beach**, **CAPE WOOLAMAI STATE FAUNA RESERVE**

**OSWIN ROBERTS RESERVE**, **COALA CONSERVATION RESERVE**, **WHALE MIGRATION**, **SHEARWATERS**, **PHILLIP ISLAND NATIONAL SURFING RESERVE**

**GRAND PRIX CIRCUIT**, **SMITHS BEACH**, **SMITHS BEACH**, **SMITHS BEACH**

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# PICES Pop Up officially opened

## ART

The highly successful PICES Pop Up art exhibition was officially opened last Friday night (January 3) at Berninneit in Cowes. The exhibition was opened by Bass Coast Mayor, Cr Rochelle Halstead, with artists, PICES committee members and community members in attendance. Throughout January, the two curated Pop Up exhibitions feature 22 artists. Pop Up 1 Exhibition runs until January 14 and features: Rob Barron (Pottery); Printmakers Lana de Jager, Liz

Tyler and Silvi Glattauer; Martine Zajacek (Collage); and paintings by Jenny Jackson, Julie Lundgren Coulter, Anne Mestitz, Lindy Patterson, Karen Preston, Linda Shaw and Kim Wood. Pop Up 2 Exhibition runs from January 16 to 27 and features: Painters Peter Brook, Stephen Glover, Melinda Holt, Carolyne Jane, Candida van Rood and Rain White; Wendy Habraken-Flack (Drawing); Jillian Mitchell (Photography); Kate Stuart (Pottery); and Kylie Watson (Printmaking). For more information visit [pices.org.au](http://pices.org.au)



Woodfired stoneware artist Robert Barron of Gooseneck Pottery, who features in Pop Up 1, on show until January 14.



Watercolour artist Jenny Jackson features in the first PICES Pop Up exhibition, currently showing at Berninneit.



Emily Walker (Exhibition Curator) with her mother Meredith Walker at the PICES opening night.



Lenny Van Berkel with artist Liz Tyler, Linda Huston and Michelle Donohue



Artist Anne Mestitz with her mixed media art pieces, on display as part of the Pop Up 1 exhibition.



New Island Ward councillor Tracey Bell and Bass Coast Mayor Cr Rochelle Halstead at the PICES Pop-Up exhibition opening night.



Committee members Karen Preston with Carolyne O'Callaghan (PICES events) and Diana Bannister.



From left to right: The PICES team: Judy Wolstenholme, Sandra Henstridge, Luke Fricke, Joe La Pira, Sue Hoare, Mayor Cr Rochelle Halstead, Clem Fries, Emily Walker, Carolyne O'Callaghan and Imelda Daly.

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Morning Adrift, Triabunna Tasmania  
David Taylor A.W.I.F.V.A.S.

Summer Days, Spirit of the Island  
Diana Edwards A.G.R.A.F.

Binalong Bay Dreaming  
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This exhibition represents spontaneity, freshness and light from life with its living moments to share from near and far; Phillip Island, Bass Coast, Gippsland, Central Australia, and countries abroad.

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**22**  
Artists

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**4-14 Jan, 2025**

**Pop Up Two Art Exhibition:**  
**16-27 Jan, 2025**

**January 4 - 27, 2025. Open Daily 10am - 4pm**  
**Berninneit Art Gallery, 91-97 Thompson Avenue, Cowes Vic 3922**

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The circus has many new artists and new acts this year, including tight wire walking and illusions and the most adorable cheeky baby goats. Tickets are available onsite from one hour before each show.



Crowd favourites, the clowns, return with new routines, along with trapeze acts, juggling and beautiful palomino horses. There are performances every day except Thursdays.

# Circus brings glamour and excitement

## ENTERTAINMENT

Eroni's Circus draws inspiration from the classical circus- es of yesteryear.

Beautiful, glamorous costuming, lively original music, immaculately presented animals, traditional circus clowns, the smell of sawdust and popcorn in the air and the anticipation of what exciting act will come out next, through the red velvet curtain ... Eroni's Circus is back on Phillip Island.

Located at 205 Thompson Avenue, the circus has many new artists and new acts this year. Tight wire walking and illusions and the most adorable cheeky baby goats that have not performed in Cowes

on previous visits, alongside crowd favourites clowns, (performing new routines) trapeze acts, juggling and beautiful palomino horses.

Performing throughout the school holidays in Cowes (next to the RSL) the circus prides itself as a very family-oriented circus that caters for all ages, from grandparents through to young children.

General admission tickets are very affordable for almost two hours of fast paced live entertainment at only \$35 for adults and \$25 for children.

First row ringside are only an extra \$5 per person. Tickets are available onsite from one hour before each show.

Snack foods such as Dagwood dogs, freshly made hot

cinnamon donuts, hot jam donuts, milk shakes, coffee, cold drinks, fairy floss, and freshly popped corn are available from the circus food trailer. There are also games and novelty souvenirs for sale. The circus does not book at all; simply purchase your tickets at the door.

EFTPOS is available, but bringing cash is recommended, as sometimes, with inconsistent internet signal, the EFTPOS machines can drop out.

Please note if the temperature is extremely hot, the 1pm performance may be cancelled. Please call ahead on forecasted hot weekends to confirm if the 1pm show will go ahead.

Enquiries on 0477 874 784.

### This week's performances

– Tuesday 7th, Wednesday 8th, Friday 10th: 7pm  
Thursday 9th: No show  
Saturday 11th: 1pm & 7pm  
Sunday 12th: 1pm

### Upcoming shows

Monday 13th, Tuesday 14th, Wednesday 15th, Friday 17th: 7pm  
Saturday 18th: 1pm & 7pm  
Sunday 19th: 1pm  
Monday 20th, Tuesday 21st, Wednesday 22nd, Friday 24th: 7pm  
Saturday 25th: 1pm & 7pm  
Sunday 26th: 1pm

[eroniscircus.com/](http://eroniscircus.com/)

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## Enjoy the the circus – for free

### GIVEAWAY

The Advertiser has five free double passes to experience all the excitement of Eroni's Circus.

To treat yourself to the glamour and thrills of this classic circus, drop by the office at 60 Chapel Street in Cowes after 10am on Wednesday, January 8.

The first five lucky circus-loving readers will receive a double pass to Eroni's Circus, performing throughout the school holidays in Cowes.

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**SPECTACULAR 90 MINUTE SHOW**

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The final tickets are on sale for this year's Ocean Sounds Festival on January 11 at Churchill Island.

# Don't miss Ocean Sounds

## MUSIC

The final tickets for this year's Ocean Sounds Festival on January 11 are selling fast. Don't miss your chance to enjoy a brilliant line up of Australian music in the stunning natural environment of Churchill Island. As well as a first-class musical line up, Ocean Sounds is a celebration of local wines and gourmet food. The family-friendly atmosphere makes it the perfect location to catch up with friends and family. Returning for the eighth time, this year's festival is a triple headliner, featuring Birds of Tokyo, Boy & Bear and Cat Empire. As well as sharing a deserved reputation as great live acts, the three have between them garnered 30 ARIA nominations as well as countless awards and hit records. They are joined on the Ocean

Sounds stage by the Sunshine and Disco Faith Choir, Jem Cassar-Daley, Cool Out Sun and Ozone Street. There is also a special performance by Millowl Dreaming. Over the years, Ocean Sounds has captured the ears and hearts of locals and visitors with its relaxed and welcoming atmosphere and commitment to sustainability. This year, the festival won the Bass Coast Business Awards Business of the Year, as well as securing the Event Excellence award. The judges praised the festival for the detail of its submission, noting its "sustainability initiatives". They congratulated the small team for successfully organising a large-scale event. Local punters have voted with their feet, with Ocean Sounds consistently selling out.

There's still time to be part of this year's event. Head to the Ocean Sounds website to secure your ticket. Adult, youth and children's tickets available, with prices ranging from \$10 to \$134. Children under the age of 18 must be accompanied by an adult. Car passes can be purchased and tickets for shuttle buses which operate from Venus Bay, Cowes, San Remo and Cape Woolamai. Gates open at midday on Saturday, January 11. Pack your picnic rug, grab your friends, and head to Churchill Island to enjoy stunning local wines, gourmet food, the summer-sun softly setting over the ocean and some of Australia's most amazing live music. [www.oceansoundsfestival.com.au/](http://www.oceansoundsfestival.com.au/) / Sponsored article /



Woolamai Beach Surf Life Saving Club (WBSLSC) is holding a free Community Native Plants Working Bee and Beach Cleanup Day on January 25, from 9am to 12pm.

## Surf club working bee

### ENVIRONMENT

Woolamai Beach Surf Life Saving Club (WBSLSC) is holding a Community Native Plants Working Bee and Beach Cleanup Day on January 25, from 9am to 12pm. Organised in collaboration with Phillip Island Nature Parks, the free day is focused on the importance of sand dune regeneration and coastal conservation. One session will focus on watering indigenous native vegetation and weeding non-native vegetation, to stabilise the sand dunes, ensuring the coastline's long-term health, as well as repairing wooden stake and rope fencing. In another session, participants will engage in a beach

cleanup, collecting litter and debris to protect local wildlife. The event will conclude with an educational session for youth participants on environmental stewardship, led by experts from Phillip Island Nature Parks. The event is free, but registration is essential. Please bring a hat, sunscreen, gloves (various sizes provided if you don't own gardening gloves), sturdy shoes, a reusable water bottle, and a packed lunch. Event: Community Native Plants Working Bee and Beach Cleanup Day. January 25, from 9am to 12pm. Meet at the Woolamai Beach Surf Life Saving Club. Bookings: [summerbythesea.vic.gov.au/.../woolamai-beach...](http://summerbythesea.vic.gov.au/.../woolamai-beach.../)

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Join Paddington on an adventure to Peru. Paddington in Peru is screening at Berninneit throughout January, one of several kids films on offer these holidays.

## A holiday feast of film and fun

### ENTERTAINMENT

There's a feast of entertainment available these holidays at Berninneit, in the heart of Cowes.

If it's too hot, too wet or you just want a break from the beach, throughout January there are films and live performances to keep you and the kids entertained.

Treat the little ones to a world-class puppet experience at Bunktopia on January 23.

Hailed in New York as "pure theatre magic, filling the room with joy and wonder" (NY Theatre Now), creator Jeff Achtem trots out a selection of his favourite puppetry characters and clown adventures.

This show appeals to all ages and is recommended for every-

one four and over.

The show on January 23 starts at 2pm. Tickets start from \$15 and are available for adults, concession card holders, youth and children, as well as family group tickets.

Or if kicking back and enjoying some live music is more your thing, join local surf band El Rollo on the lawn at Berninneit on Friday, January 24 from 6.30pm until 8.30pm.

### On screen

The Berninneit cinema has a great holiday program, with films catering for the kids and adults.

Screenings for the kids include Sonic the Hedgehog 3, Paddington in Peru, Moana 2

and Magic Beach.

Adults can enjoy the new Cate Blanchett film Rumours, Piece by Piece (a Lego animation of the life and career of Pharrell Williams), a sing-a-long session of Wicked Part 1, plus screenings of surf film You Should Have Been Here Yesterday, the new Jesse Eisenberg film A Real Pain and Andrew Garfield and Florence Pugh in We Live in Time.

Visit the BassCoastCulturalVenues website for screening times and to book your tickets.

Tickets can also be purchased at Berninneit, open from 9.30am - 5pm weekdays and 10am - 4pm weekends.

[www.basscoastculturalvenues.com/berninneit-cowes](http://www.basscoastculturalvenues.com/berninneit-cowes)  
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## Bass Coast celebrates New Year in style

A stunning fireworks display was watched by hundreds of people on the Cowes foreshore, welcoming in 2025.

Over in Coronet Bay, 9.30pm fireworks delighted families and friends, as they saw in the new year. Both displays were presented by Bass Coast Shire Council. A third fireworks display was held at the Inverloch Rec Reserve.

The council is calling for feedback from the community on the displays, as part of a review of fireworks at Christmas and New Year. Feedback is open until January 31.

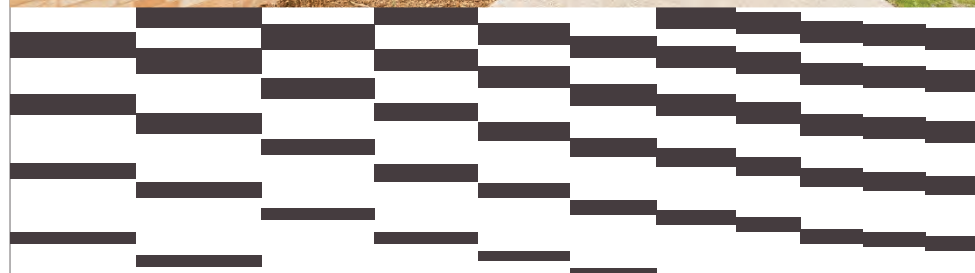
[engage.basscoast.vic.gov.au/eoycelebrations](mailto:engage.basscoast.vic.gov.au/eoycelebrations)



The Cowes NYE fireworks on the jetty, captured by Samantha Kruizinga from Erehwon Point.



Photographer Michelle Diggins was at Coronet Bay to catch the 9.30pm fireworks display on New Year's Eve.



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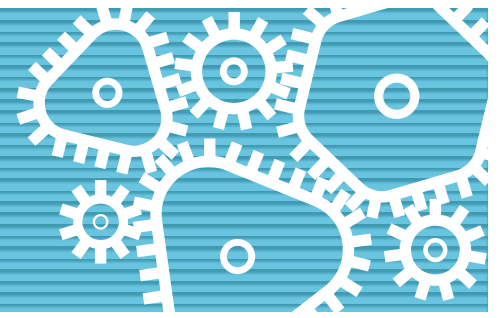
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## DEATHS



### Kevin Wood

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Australian Army

The President, Committee, Members, Management and Staff of the Phillip Island RSL Sub-Branch deeply regret to announce the passing of Kevin Wood, a respected Service Member of our Sub-Branch. Our sincere condolences are extended to The Wood Family

LEST WE FORGET.

## PUBLIC NOTICES



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# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



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

## Don't "pass the buck" to climate change

I applaud the councillors' lobbying for action at Silverleaves Beach. However, their invocation of climate change in the Advertiser (December 18) is both misleading, and disingenuous.

Prior to mid-2022, the Silverleaves beach and dune structures appeared to be in a state of equilibrium, with a steady drift of sand moving from west to east, with longstanding vegetation providing stability for the dunes.

During FY2021-22, council completed the Cowes East Foreshore Restoration Project, consisting of eight new groynes, and the rock revetment structure, to the west of Silverleaves beach. (Revetments are structures that prevent soil erosion by slowing the flow of water and catching sediment). Beach sand has successfully banked up against the western side of each of the eight new groynes. Clearly, the easterly drift of sand has been captured and is accumulating at these groynes as expected.

However, since early 2023, the Silverleaves foreshore dunes have suffered a tragic and irretrievable loss of native flora and habitat, including the felling of scores of mature banksia trees. The dunes are not being replenished, but are being washed away. A direct consequence of the good works east of Rose Avenue.

So please, do not use climate change as an excuse to bury the unintended consequences of direct human intervention - namely the Cowes East Foreshore Restoration Project of 2022 between Rose Avenue and Coghlan Road.

Ian Gordon, Cowes

## Water restrictions needed

On Wednesday (December 18) I drove onto the island and saw the current supposed water level sign at 58 per cent.

No forecast of significant rain, January and February our driest months and Christmas holidays upon us, then followed by Easter. This to me spells one thing: trouble. You can also discount at least 15 per cent of that total as silt build up, so in reality you have just over 40 per cent left.

Increased water restrictions are needed now: no

car washing or boats and caravans, no driveway washing, limited garden watering just for a start.

Time to act now Westernport Water. I saw this happen in the Millennium drought. Don't let it happen again.

Geoff Lee, Longwarry  
(Former member of the Westernport Water board)

## Backyard smoke and neighbours

It is very rewarding having friends and family over to share food, conversation and laughter, particularly now summer is upon us.

As much as we all like to spend quality time outdoors, there is a problem. There shouldn't be. Wood fired BBQ's and fire pits have increased in popularity as a convivial way today to socialise during the weekend and holidays.

Smoke however, doesn't observe property boundaries and can on its own accord infiltrate and fill neighbours properties. Affected residents retreat inside and close up their homes. Asthmatics and those with respiratory problems can be adversely affected.

The concern is not so much for the occasional use of wood fired outdoor burners but more for those who make it a weekend ritual, without any concern for those denied access to their own backyards due to smoke pollution.

Council by-laws cover such things as barking dogs, loud and sustained music but not smoke pollution. Why?

The thought is that much of this anti-social behaviour is unintentional. The aggrieved might

well be their very friendly non-aggressive neighbours.

Smoky home, smoky outdoors, smoky washing.  
D Hoare, Cowes

## A noisy Blitz

Well, we all got the advance letter in the mail warning us that Blitz Golf was coming to Phillip Island to be held at the Red Rocks Golf Club. It was advertised in the newspaper on December 18, but no-one could have envisioned that the "please be aware of amplified music" would be so loud that it probably would have broken the legal neighbourhood noise limits of what locals should put up with.

It went for eight long, horrendous hours. I would be surprised if the 1200 people expected to show up for the event didn't have some form of hearing damage being up close and personal at ground zero with music played at that level. In fact, the music was so loud, our homes were vibrating. Probably fit for the Melbourne Stadium, but not the local neighbourhood.

As locals living near the golf course, the quiet rural area of Red Rocks and Ventnor was shattered by the event. It not only put residents under extreme stress, but also affected the wildlife that surround the golf-course which live and graze in the bushland all around us. The consensus and post event discussions held by the residents was the Red Rocks Golf Club will have a huge fight on their hands if they even consider the idea of running this event ever again, in what is supposed to be a quiet rural community.

A Schade, Cowes



## SPECIAL DELIVERY



## Welcome Tiara

Tiara Brittini-Jade Rogan was born at Wonthaggi Hospital on November 18, weighing 3.57kg. She is a daughter for Shaun and Kehoma Rogan of Phillip Island, and a sister for Blayde (15) and Eli (11).

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The high temperatures saw the busiest weekend of rescues in 20 years across Victoria. At Smiths Beach, extraordinarily large crowds saw lifeguards kept busy with several rescues also taking place. Photo: Greg Spiller. More photos at [pirs.com.au/sport](https://pirs.com.au/sport)

# Surf life savers on the go

## BEACH SAFETY

Woolamai Beach Surf Life Saving Club (WBSLSC) had a busy start to summer, with the hot conditions over the weekend attracting hundreds of beach goers.

WBSLSC President Jason Close said the high temperatures saw the busiest weekend for rescues statewide in 20 years.

Jason said there were 146 rescues on Saturday and 21 on Sunday recorded by Life Saving Victoria.

"The combination of extremely hot weather, January school holidays and strong swells, currents and rips led to a larger than usual number of rescues and incidents across the state.

"In addition to the rescues, there were thousands of preventative actions carried out at patrolled beaches by lifeguards and volunteer lifesavers."

In the Bass District which includes clubs such as Woolamai Beach, Cape Paterson, Wonthaggi, Inverloch, Venus Bay and Waratah Beach there were 31 rescues across the weekend.

"A large mass rescue at Woolamai saw life savers rescue eight swimmers in one incident," Jason said.

"Consequently the beach was then closed for several hours due to the conditions becoming more dangerous with the incoming tide, large swell and side currents feeding in to rips."

He said because of the vigilance of WBSLSC volunteer life savers, they were able to get to the swimmers quickly and return everyone safely to shore.

At Smiths Beach extraordinarily large crowds saw lifeguards kept busy with several rescues also taking place.

"Life savers were kept busy with hundreds of preventative actions which also took place at each beach," said Jason.

"While lifesavers were kept busy at patrolled beaches, we would also like to acknowledge the efforts of surfers at other beaches who assisted swimmers who found themselves in trouble.

"However we would urge all people to swim only at a patrolled beach as you can't always count on help being readily available if you are in a remote unpatrolled location."

Woolamai, Cowes and Smiths Beach are currently patrolled from 10am until 6pm every day.

"Phillip Island has approximately 100km of coastline and life savers and lifeguards cannot be everywhere all of the time," Jason said.

"There are simply not enough volunteers or resources available to be at every beach.

"There are also a number of beaches which due to their remoteness, limited accessibility and beach conditions, that we simply do not want people to swim at."

The club President stressed that swimming at any unpatrolled beach is not advisable, but Anzacs, Colonnades, Forrest Caves, Surf Beach, Berrys Beach and Kilcunda were of particular concern.

"Each of these beaches is unpatrolled and can be hazardous for swimming.

"Their remoteness means it takes time for help to arrive, and this can often mean it is too late.

"Some of these beaches can also be very difficult for first responders to access. These are some of the reasons that Woolamai Beach and Smiths Beach when patrolled are better options."

Beach goers are encouraged to

download the BeachSafe app before heading to the beach.

Last summer five lives were lost from drownings at remote, unpatrolled beaches on Phillip Island and one at nearby Kilcunda.

There were also several near misses at remote or unpatrolled beaches where swimmers found themselves in trouble and were rescued by surfers, off duty life savers or members of the public.

## Training

In addition to the regular patrols, WBSLSC also recruited a new team of volunteers to help with beach safety, running Surf Rescue Certificate (SRC) training sessions on the final weekend of 2024.

The SRC course provides skills and knowledge needed to participate in lifesaving operations. All patrolling members must complete the course, which includes basic first aid and emergency care skills, surf awareness and surf rescue skills.

The popular Nippers program also ran from December 29 to January 5.

## Important beach safety tips

- Plan ahead.
- Always swim between the red and yellow flags at patrolled beaches. If lifesavers can't see you, they can't save you.
- Check the Beachsafe app for more information about which beaches are patrolled and for beach and weather information.
- Read safety signs and assess conditions before entering the water.
- Be sun smart. Stay hydrated. Stay safe and enjoy the beach responsibly.

Details: [www.woolamaibeach.org.au](https://www.woolamaibeach.org.au)



Joel Robinson receiving his award for Male Junior Athlete of the year. Photo courtesy of Basketball Victoria.

# Joel Robinson awarded Male Junior Athlete of the year

## BASKETBALL

Basketball Victoria's Country Commission Award recipients showcase the remarkable contributions of athletes, coaches, officials, administrators, and volunteers who continue to elevate basketball in regional Victoria.

Phillip Island Rips Graduate Joel Robinson was awarded the Ray Borne Award for Male Junior Athlete of the year.

This year has seen a year of phenomenal achievements for Joel including:

- Captained Victoria Country Bushrangers in their gold medal win at U18 Australian Junior Country Cup in January.
- Part of Phillip Island Rips U18 boys team that finished third at Basketball Victoria Country Championships in February.
- Leading scorer at U18

Australian Junior National Championships in Brisbane playing for Victoria Country in April.

- Played for Australian U17 national team at World Cup in Turkey in June.
- Played for U18 Australia-Select team at China International Invitational Tournament in Shanghai in August.
- Selected for Victoria U20 team at upcoming National Championships.

Joel has grown up playing his junior career for Phillip Island Basketball representing RIPS from U10s graduating in 2024 in his top age of U18s.

It is a huge achievement to be awarded such a prestigious award in a tough cohort of country athletes.

2024 saw great success for Phillip Island Basketball with our association receiving three awards.

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# PIBC presents Ted Grambeau Slide Night

## SURFING

Phillip Island Boardriders Club (PIBC) presents an evening celebrating surfing, photography, and community.

On Tuesday, January 14, PIBC is honoured to host Ted Grambeau Slide Night, an evening dedicated to celebrating the artistry, adventure, and storytelling of one of the surf world's most iconic photographers.

Known for his breathtaking surf imagery, Ted's career has spanned decades, taking him from Phillip Island's rugged breaks to some of the world's most iconic surf destinations.

Ted's journey began on Phillip Island, where he captured images of early PIBC members navigating the island's iconic waves.

These formative experiences paved the way for a remarkable career that has taken him to places like Hawaii, Tahiti, and Indonesia, and seen him work alongside the biggest names in surfing.

His portfolio includes jaw-dropping moments from prestigious World Surf League (WSL) events, as well as historic competitions like the Rip Curl Eddie Aikau Big Wave Invitational, one of the most revered contests in the surfing world.

## Stunning and captivating

At this special event, Ted will share recent, exclusive images from the 2025 Eddie Aikau Contest, where the world's best big wave surfers challenged towering waves on Hawaii's North Shore.

This rare showcase includes shots of Ross Clarke-Jones, a former Eddie winner and now a



PIBC presents the Ted Grambeau Slide Night on Tuesday January 14 from 7.30pm. Mark Healy at the Eddie Aikau Contest in Hawaii. Photo: Ted Grambeau.

proud Cape Woolamai resident who surfs daily with PIBC members.

Through Ted's lens, attendees will experience not just the raw power of waves like those at Waimea Bay or Teahupo'o but also the culture, camaraderie, and personal stories behind each photo.

Ted will narrate the highs and challenges of his career, from navigating treacherous conditions in the water to capturing moments that define the sport.

In addition to his work at the Eddie, Ted's photography has also documented the evolution of professional surfing, including World Surf League events and the introduction of surfing to the Olympics in Tokyo.

Whether photographing the intensity of competition or the beauty of remote surf destinations, Ted has an unparalleled ability to bring these moments to life.

## Community, surfing, and legacy

PIBC President Jake Eisen reflected on the significance of this event for the local surfing community. "As kids, many of us grew up idolizing surfers in magazines and dreaming about the waves Ted was photographing."

"This was before digital cameras and social media, so we'd eagerly wait every month for the latest issue of Tracks magazine to see Ted's photos and learn about what was happening in the surfing world," Jake said.

"To now have him here sharing his stories and work with us is a surreal and humbling experience."

"Events like this aren't just about the art – they're about bringing our community together, celebrating our shared love of surfing, and honouring a local who has captured the spirit of our sport for decades."

This event also pays tribute to Phillip Island's surfing heritage and its connection to the global surfing tribe.

"Ted's work reminds us of the deep bond that unites surfers across generations, from groms to legends like Ross Clarke-Jones, and how photography can inspire and preserve those moments forever."

**Event:** Tuesday January 15, 2025, 7.30pm

**Entry Fee:** \$15 payable on the door

**Who:** Open to all, surf enthusiasts, art lovers and community members alike.

## Phillip Island golf

### GOLF

**Tuesday, December 31**

**Men's Competition Stableford 18H**

Overall winner: Lucas Pira (2) 38 pts c/b.

A Grade winner: Lucas Pira (2) 38 pts c/b.

B Grade winner: Michael Taylor (13) 38 pts.

C Grade winner: Nigel Firth (20) 36 pts.

BDL to 33 c/b.

NTP: 5th Mark Haringsma, 7th Bez Moustafa, 10th John Enbom and 17th Bailey Hennessy.

**Men's 9 Hole Stableford.**

Overall winner: Cheryl White (20) 25 pts from Vic Mitchell (28) 21 pts.

BDL 17 pts.

**Women's Competition Stableford 18H**

Overall, Winner: Tracey Cuff (21) 37 pts from Rhinda Boyd (18) 35 pts.

BDL 33 pts c/b.

NTP: 5th N/A, 7th Jeanette Diss, 10th Tracey Cuff and 17th Debra Orr.

**Saturday, January 4**

**Men's Competition Stroke Monthly Medal 18H**

Overall winner: Ross Payne (22) 64.

A Grade winner: Adrian O'Gorman (7) 69.

B Grade winner:

Sean Ambler (15) 68.

C Grade winner: Ross Payne (22) 64.

BDL to 74 c/b.

NTP: 5th Adrian O'Gorman, 7th Brent White, 10th Rickardo and 17th Steve Keily.

Great score Brent White Eagle 18H.

Great score Jim Richardson Eagle 18H.

**Women Competition Stableford 18H**

Overall winner: Julia Mascitelli (38) 41 pts from Deb Orr (16) 40 pts.

BDL: 32 pts c/b.

NTP: 5th and 17th Debra Orr, 7th Kaye Pittman and 10th Rhonda Boyd.

**Open Comp Stableford 9H**

Overall winner: Rob Davison (9) 18 pts from Peter Hiam (35) 17 pts c/b.

BDL: 16 pts c/b

**Sunday, January 5**

**Open Comp Stableford 18H**

Overall, Winner: Vicki Amato (24) 39 pts from Conner Epifano (18) 37 pts.

BDL 33 pts.

**Open Comp Stableford 9H**

Overall, Winner: Liz Gleeson (20) 17 pts from Sara Gordon (45) 15 pts.

# JUNIOR NETBALL TRIALS

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[netballtrials.com/clubs/phillip-island-football-netbal/](http://netballtrials.com/clubs/phillip-island-football-netbal/)

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7pm, Wednesday 29th January

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## TIDE GUIDE

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

WED 8 JAN	THU 9 JAN	FRI 10 JAN	SAT 11 JAN	SUN 12 JAN	MON 13 JAN	TUE 14 JAN
LOW 12:55 am 0.75 m	LOW 1:43 am 0.91 m	LOW 2:34 am 1.08 m	LOW 3:30 am 1.23 m	LOW 4:34 am 1.34 m	HIGH 12:30 am 2.78 m	HIGH 1:36 am 2.83 m
HIGH 7:26 am 2.87 m	HIGH 8:03 am 2.79 m	HIGH 8:45 am 2.69 m	HIGH 9:33 am 2.59 m	HIGH 10:33 am 2.50 m	LOW 5:48 am 1.39 m	LOW 7:06 am 1.35 m
LOW 1:28 pm 0.48 m	LOW 2:11 pm 0.42 m	LOW 2:58 pm 0.39 m	LOW 3:50 pm 0.40 m	LOW 4:52 pm 0.44 m	HIGH 11:43 am 2.43 m	HIGH 12:59 pm 2.41 m
HIGH 8:17 pm 2.73 m	HIGH 9:15 pm 2.73 m	HIGH 10:17 pm 2.73 m	HIGH 11:22 pm 2.75 m		LOW 6:01 pm 0.47 m	LOW 7:12 pm 0.48 m

All material is supplied in good faith and is believed to be correct. No responsibility or liability for errors or omissions is accepted.



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