

# PHILLIP ISLAND & SAN REMO ADVERTISER

Your Community Voice!

WEDNESDAY, JULY 8, 2020

\$1.40 Incl. GST

# Stay on track

The Nature Parks closed off the 'blowhole extension' section of the Nobbies boardwalk over the weekend, to ease the risk of congestion and allow everyone to practice physical distancing.

## Increased patrols at key attractions

As concern over Victoria's rising COVID-19 infection rates escalates, visitors are being urged to observe the current restrictions.

There are currently no recorded active cases in Bass Coast, however the influx of visitors over the school holidays has prompted authorities to call for renewed vigilance.

Local police are working closely with Phillip Island Nature Parks to ensure visitors to attractions are following the social distancing requirements.

The focus will be on areas like

Pyramid Rock and the Nobbies and beach lookouts where people are gathering to watch for whales.

"People forget about instructions – particularly the 1.5 metre rule," said Acting Senior Sergeant Colin Shepherd.

"Don't block walkways. Don't gather in groups of more than 10 people.

"We don't want to crush tourism, but there is still a state of emergency and rules are in place. People need to use common sense," he said.

"If you are aware you are in a big

group, do something about it. Move away. Be proactive."

Communications Director at Phillip Island Nature Parks Roland Pick said daily patrol teams were visiting all beaches and reserves throughout the holiday period.

He said the patrols will be "enforcing the usual park regulations, but also encouraging and reminding people of the need to practice physical distancing".

"We have also installed plenty of signage at our boardwalks and viewing

platforms to remind people of physical distancing requirements, and included lots of messaging on our website and social media," Mr Pick said.


Over the weekend, the 'blowhole extension' section of the Nobbies boardwalk was closed, to ease the risk of congestion and allow everyone to practice physical distancing.

Mr Pick said the Nature Parks was grateful to visitors to the Penguin Parade, Koala Conservation and Churchill Island for their continued cooperation.

"We also thank them for their patience on the occasions that they have had a short wait to gain entry to any of our venues because of the numbers of people already onsite, which we are managing very closely. "Many visitors are reporting a wonderful penguin viewing experience, with a continued reduced capacity of only 100 people per night."

The Penguin Parade is sold out until the end of school holidays, and weekends are already very heavily booked right through to the end of July.

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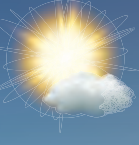





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# PHILLIP ISLAND

## 7 DAY WEATHER FORECAST

WED July 8	THUR July 9	FRI July 10	SAT July 11	SUN July 12	MON July 13	TUE July 14
						
Partly cloudy	Partly cloudy	Possible shower	Shower or two	Shower or two	Partly cloudy	Partly cloudy
4° 13°	5° 14°	6° 14°	5° 14°	6° 14°	9° 13°	8° 13°

### Bass Coast COVID-19 update\*

3080  
tests done locally

4  
Local residents  
tested positive

0  
Active cases

\*From BCH Assessment clinics only.

Your Community Voice!



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# Just three months to council election

## CURRENT COUNCILLORS – WHO'S RUNNING AND WHO'S NOT

### ISLAND WARD



Pam  
Rothfield  
**No.**

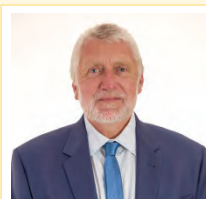


Stephen  
Fullarton  
**No.**



Michael  
Whelan  
**?**

### WESTERN PORT WARD



Geoff  
Ellis  
**Yes.**



Bruce  
Kent  
**Yes.**



Clare  
Le Serve  
**Yes.**

### BUNURONG WARD



Les  
Larke  
**Yes.**



Julian  
Brown  
**?**



Brett  
Tessari  
**?**

Phillip Island's Island Ward looks set for a contested battle at this year's Bass Coast Shire elections, with two of the three current councillors opting out of the race.

The third councillor, Michael Whelan, said he was yet to decide whether he would throw his hat in the ring for the Island Ward, which includes Cowes, Ventnor, Rhyll and Smiths Beach, although rumours were circulating that he had already agreed to join a ticket with new candidates.

Western Port Ward – which covers Surf Beach, Sunderland Bay, through to San Remo, Kilcunda and Grantville – will see all three current councillors, Bruce Kent, Clare Le Serve and Geoff Ellis re-stand.

Bunurong Ward - Wonthaggi, Inverloch and Cape Paterson – has only one definite, Les Larke, with both Julian Brown and current mayor Brett Tessari undecided.

The elections, scheduled on Saturday, October 24, will be by post for every council, because of COVID-19 restrictions, the first-time postal voting has been used across all Victorian councils.

So with just over three months until we head to the polls, what are the key issues on which candidates will be vying for votes.

The Advertiser asked residents, who take an active interest in council, what they see as some of the vote winners come October.

### Community pool and sports hub

Phillip Island has patiently waited for a community pool for decades.

Aquatic Centre Fund secretary Peter McMahon said while candidates at the last election all promised a pool, it was yet to be delivered.

However, Peter said he was confident a pool would be built on the carnival land, on the corner of Phillip Island and Ventnor roads, which last month received the green light from the state government for compulsory acquisition. "The recreational requirements for the island are one of the key issues at this coming election," Peter said.

"It won't happen overnight, but every councillor really needs to make sure it gets up and running."

Last year the shire initiated a formal process, through Plan-

ning Scheme Amendment C153, to compulsorily acquire the 16ha carnival land, explaining that by combining the neighbouring Hilton Chadwick Reserve with the carnival site, the consolidated 32ha would allow for more sports facilities, including a swimming pool.

### Cowes Cultural Centre

Outgoing councillor Stephen Fullarton urged the incoming island ward councillors to continue to support the work done by this current group of councillors, stating the cultural centre should be seen through to its finish.

The site will be handed over to a demolition company after July 13, with the works expected to take about two months to finish.

The project construction is not due to begin until May 2021.

"Our community has been working on this for decades and I'd hate to see it over-turned by a new council," Cr Fullarton said, adding that he called for "genuine locals" to stand at the election to "represent the community, supporting business, tourism, farming and maintain the environment".

### Erosion

Cowes community advocate Linda Marston – who is a member of Island Voice, the aquatic centre, and Phillip Island medical hub group – nominated beach erosion control across Bass Coast as a key election issue.

"They should be out there putting every ounce of energy into trying to ensure we get funding to preserve and protect our beaches, on the island, at Inverloch and the waterline," Linda said.

This winter king tides combined with gale force northerly winds had seen waves erode dunes at Cowes east to within one metre of some property fence lines.

Cowes East Foreshore Preventative Action Group chair Ken Hailey described it as the "worst ever seen", adding a "tipping point has been reached" and homes could soon be "uninsurable and worthless".

At the time CEFPAG and the Bass Coast Shire wrote to the state government seeking urgent funds to erect a rockwall and groynes.

A \$50,000 design to address erosion on the Cowes east fore-

shore is being jointly funded by the state government and the shire, with a coastal engineer earlier this year appointed to carry out a plan to provide solutions, which are due any week.

In addition, the Federal Government has given \$1.5 million to the shire for erosion works.

### Dogs off-leash

Dogs on off-leash beaches looks set to be a big issue for incoming councillors, following a deep divide in the community on the issue (see separate story).

At last month's council meeting the shire promised a clampdown of dog owners in a bid to protect nesting hooded plovers from off-leash dogs on beaches.

Linda Marston said councillors needed to "adhere to their oath" and represent the community, "putting aside their own feelings and considerations".

### Town boundaries

At the last council election four years ago, the majority of councillors vowed to maintain current town boundaries.

*Continued page 5*



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Ronnie grew up in Toorak and since 1977 has run his family business, Klepner's Fine Antique Jewellery on Little Collins Street in the CBD, the oldest continuous antique jewellery store in the Melbourne CBD, where he continues to work three days a week.

# Ronnie launches his council campaign

If Ronnie Bauer is successfully elected as a Bass Coast councillor at this October's local government election, he will make history.

In fact, just standing as a candidate, he has already entered the record books.

That's because no other candidate – or councillor – in the history of Bass Coast, or Phillip Island, was a past president of the Australian Sex Party.

And yes, he's well used to hearing the chuckles and racy guffaws when he reveals his past political persuasion.

"It was never about sex," Ronnie clarifies.

"That was just the name. It was always about the policies. In fact when I was president I successfully changed the name of the party to the Reason Party."

The policies that Ronnie supported at the time back in 2016 were dying with dignity and drug reform such as pill testing and safe injecting rooms.

Ronnie, who has had a foreshore home in Cowes west since 1981, even initially stood as a Reason Party candidate at the 2018 Victorian state election in our seat of Bass, but resigned from the party early to stand as an independent candidate.

While he did not earn a seat in Spring Street, Ronnie considers his tilt at state politics a success.

"Even back then, the main aim was to build a profile so I could stand for

Bass Coast Shire council elections," says Ronnie, now semi-retired from his Melbourne antique jewellery business.

"Generally, people start in council and go up to state politics, but I've done it the other way round."

## Car ferry advocate

While the 64-year-old says he has always been interested in politics, what sparked his dedication to Bass Coast Shire – and his current election bid – was the controversial Cowes to Stony Point car ferry.

Ronnie is a member the Cowes Yacht Club ("I have a 22-foot power boat that used to belong to (shock jock) Steve Price").

He says it was in 2018 that he received a surprising notice from the club about the proposal to put a car ferry terminal at the club.

"In 2010 I had been on the Cowes footy oval protesting against the car ferry. I was not then – and still am not – against the car ferry. I was protesting the infrastructure of the terminal," said Ronnie, who is a member of Island Voice.

"In 2018 I was appalled because of the lack of community consultation, especially with owners of homes in the area, and also because they were wanting to put an industrial terminal in a residential area."

Ronnie subsequently joined the local Save Our Beaches group, waving a placard in a street protest against

the proposed Cowes west locations.

Ultimately, he became a dedicated advocate for the Cowes jetty as a car ferry terminal, but lobbying for a better design than what was proposed in 2010.

As an independent candidate in the 2018 Victorian election, a central plank of his platform was to put a car ferry terminal on the Cowes jetty.

His other state election promises included building a community hospital for Cowes, building a junior secondary campus at San Remo, instigating measures to stop coastal erosion, support for Phillip Island to become a stand-alone council split from Wonthaggi, and increasing measures to stop domestic violence.

He ended up with about 400 votes and gave his preferences to Liberal Brian Paynter ("because it was clear Labor was going to win and we need to keep this seat marginal").

## Election platform

While the car ferry inspired him to become a council candidate for Bass Coast, his election platform has since expanded.

If elected to council, Ronnie hopes to achieve:

- Three bin system: red bins should be emptied weekly during peak holiday season in summer and Easter, in addition bins should be labelled to detail which nights they need to be placed on kerbs;

*Continued page 12*



A massive landslide on June 29 has highlighted the need for urgent action on the foreshore at Jam Jerrup.

# Slipping away

A huge section of the cliff at Jam Jerrup collapsed last week.

Like Cowes East and Inverloch, the community at Jam Jerrup has campaigned for years for remedial work to protect their foreshore areas.

Earlier this year, the state government committed \$500,000 to stabilise erosion and restore the coastline.

Tony Laughton, the President of the Lang Lang foreshore committee of management said the most recent collapse highlighted how urgent the situation is.

"It's one of the biggest collapses I've seen. One of the rocks is the size of a small car. It took a couple of metres out of the cliff," he said.

"There are lots of fault lines along the cliff, so it will keep happening."

"Thank goodness the state government gave us this money," he continued.

"We just need to get started now."

He said geo-tech analysis of the cliff face would determine what type of structure is suitable to address the issue and the Department of Environment Land Water and Planning (DELWP) expected to have the analysis within a fortnight.

"It will be a rock wall, but it might need modifications," he explained.

The existing 900 metre rock wall was completed seven years ago and Tony believes the long wait to complete the wall is part of the reason the erosion has become so bad.

At present, there is no access to the beach, and Tony said money was needed to help repair the access as well.

"The foreshore is Crown land and used by hundreds of people for fishing and kayaking."

He said the recent landslide highlights the ongoing problem the area

is facing.

"It is only seven or eight metres away from the road, so the government may not consider it urgent yet, but the closer the erosion gets to the road, the more expensive it is to fix it."

"We don't want to get to the Inverloch situation."

The foreshore road goes down to very popular fishing spot.

"Fishermen go down at night and sometimes there can be 30-40 cars in the carpark. It's not just the people who live here."

Even with the recently announced state government funding, Tony said the local community will need to raise money to complete the work needed to secure the foreshore.

The \$500,000 is not enough to cover the cost of building the remaining 300 metres of rock wall and to fix access to beach.

He said the foreshore committee paid to have proper plans developed to address the erosion, which helped secure the state government funding.

He's hopeful Council will also commit funds to the project.

## Concern for Cowes

Tony said he was aware the residents of Cowes East had their own erosion battle.

He believes the close proximity of a public road helped their cause, but private foreshore residences faced a harder battle.

"Government doesn't have to protect private property, but I don't believe you can just say people shouldn't live there. These are existing buildings and council has taken rates off people for decades. I think they should be paying to get it fixed."

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# “I own a dog and I vote!”

Off-leash areas and dogs on beaches look set to be a hot issue at the upcoming council election.

A decision at last month's council meeting to clamp down on dog owners at Ventnor's off-leash beach to protect hooded plovers has sparked outrage in the dog-loving community.

The decision came after resident Meg Anderson questioned if the 24/7 off-leash area on Ventnor beach could be reviewed.

And Phillip Island dog owners have drawn a line in the sand.

“I own a dog and I vote!” declares the newly created Phillip Island Dog Owners Association Facebook page.

A meeting to establish the association on July 11, at 11am is being convened by Greg Price.

“Local dog owners feel they need a united voice,” Greg said.

“I think they felt ambushed by the Meg Anderson question to council last month.”

He said the aim of the association was to have a united voice to communicate to all levels of government and to ensure the existing off-leash areas are maintained.

There are currently three off-leash areas on Phillip Island beaches – Ventnor, Cowes and Cape Woolamai, as well as an off-leash park at Blue Gum Reserve.

“A lot of work went into creating these three safe areas. Dog owners are grateful to have a space and they certainly support maintaining the areas where hooded plovers are.”

Greg said despite extensive consultation over the off-leash areas, there were groups in the community who



*A meeting on July 11 will establish the Phillip Island Dog Owners Association, to provide a united voice to maintain existing off-leash areas.*

didn't want to accept the outcome.

“It's just this push, push, push. These areas were identified through a lot of consultation, but it seems that some people are pushing to restrict them.

“I was a bit surprised. I honestly thought that Council, Phillip Island Nature Parks and the community had done a great job arriving at those areas.”

Greg said his family regularly use the Ventnor off-leash area for their two dogs and believes that the vast majority of dog owners have their dogs under effective control.

He described the call to review the

newly established area as a “low shot”.

“I hate seeing anyone get kicked in the guts. I thought – ‘leave these people alone’.

“We have a really lovely community. Then there are people who want to force the way they live onto the community.

“If a group wants to take away those off-leash areas, it will be a divisive issue,” Greg warned.

Already the new Facebook group has attracted over 780 members and potential candidates for the upcoming election are being left in no doubt that this is a vote-defining issue.

“We don't want a fight, we just want to maintain what we've got,” said Greg.

He dismissed one councillor's criticism of the process to establish the off-leash areas, saying it “smacked of ‘I didn't get my own way’”.

“If you're a dog owner, you're not a valued member of our community?” questioned Greg.

“Dog owners just want to continue to walk their dogs on the beach. When you look at the length of coast on Phillip Island, there's enough room for everybody.”

The public meeting will be held at 11am on July 11 in the garden of the Cowes Cultural Centre.

Due to restrictions on public gatherings (no more than 10 people), members are being asked to attend online.

The plan is to hold an Annual General Meeting for the new association in August.

*Details on the Phillip Island Dog Owners Association Facebook page.*



*Totally Renewable Phillip Island launched its Active Transport Report last week. Standing at a polite social distance, front: Mary Whelan; from left: James Stirton, Don Turner, Neroli Raff, Chris Peckett, Michael Whelan, Wayne Foster, Damian Prendergast, and Bhavani Rooks.*

## Island Cycle Safe

Totally Renewable Phillip Island is calling for safer cycling routes across Phillip Island.

The group has released its Active Transport Report, calling for all levels of government to prioritise funding for a Cycle Safe Network across the island.

It says that focusing on four key areas would establish a cycling network across the island and encourage more people to take up active transport rather than relying on cars.

The key recommendations are:

- A cycling link between Cowes and the Nobbies
- Cycling links to local schools
- Bicycle lanes in Thompson Avenue and Settlement Road
- Connecting existing pathways, to link townships and major tourism destinations

Mary Whelan compiled the report and said cycling infrastructure needs to be given a greater priority.

“This report isn't doing anything new, it's simply drawing out what has been done in existing plans and strategies,” she explained.

She said documents like the Cowes Activity Plan and the Phillip Island Integrated Transport Study (PIITS) – both adopted by Bass Coast Shire Council – already include cycling recommendations.

The Cowes Activity Plan includes recommendations to change the existing cycling lane in Thompson Avenue, while PIITS did extensive work on cycling and pedestrian pathways.

“We need to take up the recommendations and increase funding and give them a greater priority,” Mary said.

“Let's look at cycling with a greater priority and look at achieving some of the things that were part of those recommendations.”

The launch of the report, which included presenting the report to representatives from Council, was scaled down due to Coronavirus restrictions.

However Mary is hoping the local community will support the call for increased funding for a cycling network.

“We want people to contact councillors and MPs and tell them how important cycling is to them and how we need to make cycling on Phillip Island safer.”

She said TRPI would also be con-

tacting all the local schools to support and identify their cycling issues.

The group also intends to send the report to Sustainability Victoria, Transport Victoria and Tourism Victoria, to highlight how supporting active transport on Phillip Island aligns with those organisations' goals.

As well as encouraging people to get on their bikes, Mary believes creating a cycle safe island will be a significant drawcard that can generate business opportunities.

“It's consistent with valuing the environment, creating a smaller footprint. People are concerned about those sorts of things.”

She sees the report as a chance to start a conversation and get the community to support safe cycling initiatives.

“We wanted to get the report out there and get people talking about it. TRPI is a small community group. There's only so much we can do.

“We're harnessing what we know and what people have said in the past. We want to give it a sharper lens and get some actions on it.”

### Bike users welcome report

The Phillip Island Bicycle User Group (BUG) welcomed the report, noting the goal of TRPI was to promote and implement strategies that result in Phillip Island becoming carbon neutral by 2030.

“When this network is achieved, there is the potential for less reliance on motor transport, and therefore more adults and children safely walking and cycling as the default way of travelling to shops, schools, beaches and community facilities,” a BUG statement said.

“It is hoped that this will not only lead to a neutral contribution to carbon in the atmosphere, but also improved health and social outcomes for us all.

“There are also greater opportunities for environmental tourism, whereby visitors could more safely explore our island's natural environment by walking and cycling in far greater numbers.”

The group called on the community to support the report and let Council know that better paths were needed.

View the report at: [totallyrenewablephillipisland.weebly.com/active-transport.html](https://totallyrenewablephillipisland.weebly.com/active-transport.html)

# Dogs divide runs deep

The community divide over dogs on beaches is intensifying.

Two new dog off-leash beach areas were created last October, after a sustained campaign by local dog owners, while the existing off-leash area at Ventnor was extended to a 24/7 off-leash area.

At the time, several councillors voted against the new areas, introduced as part of a review of the Domestic Animal Management Plan.

Cr Michael Whelan said he was concerned that 99.9 per cent of owners didn't have effective voice control over their dogs.

He was also critical of the consultation methods used, saying “surveys are biased, filled in by people with a specific interest.”

Since the new areas were established Bass Coast Shire Council said there have been no reports of attacks or incidents.

Despite concerns about the potential impact of off-leash areas on wildlife, particularly the Hooded Plover, last month, Phillip Island Nature Parks reported a successful breeding season for the vulnerable little shore birds.

However opponents of the off-leash areas raised their concerns again at

last month's council meeting.

In response, CEO Ali Wastie said: “Council will be gathering community feedback and continuing with its observations of dog owner and beach user behaviour at all current beach off-leash areas during the coming financial year, which is the last year of the current Domestic Animal Management Plan.”

Ms Wastie said the information would be used to help identify if current off-leash beach areas are meeting community expectations and reducing the impacts of dogs on beaches.

The incoming council will be tasked with creating the new Domestic Animal Management Plan, which could include a review of the existing dogs on beach regulations and off-leash areas.

Opponents of the off-leash areas have raised concerns about the impact on wildlife and the risk of nuisance and dangerous dogs. They have called for increased patrols to protect hooded plovers and a review of the existing off-leash areas.

Dog owners have reported being threatened and harassed while walking their dogs on the beach and allegations include dog theft and the use

of poison baits.

Last month the Advertiser reported a campaign by one dog owner to encourage others to come forward if they had been approached or threatened by anyone.

### Police investigation

An investigation continues into allegations a dog was poisoned after eating a bait near the Ventnor off-leash beach last month.

Local police have warned both sides against escalating the issue.

Acting Senior Sergeant Colin Shepherd said investigations were continuing however he said the response on social media was “out of control” and actually damaging the investigation.

“All the rubbish and vigilante talk on social media needs to stop.

“I understand people are passionate about this issue, but there's not a lot of truth to many of the things being said.”

He warned all sides to “play within the rules” and said he did not want to see any threats of physical violence.

“Police are investigating and talking to those people involved. Anyone taking the law into their own hands will get dealt with in the courts.”

# Friends four life

These cute four-legged friends have brought their owners together to create an informal walking group.

Terry Allingham, John Morrison, Sally Matthews and Graeme Hampson, along with dogs Tash, Lulu, Rosie and Winky, meet every morning for a walk and a chat.

Sally said the informal catch-ups have been so important during the Coronavirus restrictions.

“The men tell me they miss the local footy and having a drink at the RSL,” she said.

The group has been meeting for years, and Sally joined in about 18 months ago.

“We met through the lives of our

dogs and their love of animals is just beautiful.”

Sally said the friendships formed from the daily catch ups are life affirming.

“It's an absolutely privilege for me to be part of this group,” she said.

“John is from an old island family and very well known for his gentle demeanour and the way he cares for others.

“Terry and Graeme have known each other for several years and usually meet at the RSL on a Sunday,” Sally explained.

She said with the Coronavirus restrictions, the daily walk has become more important than ever.

The group meets along Lovers Walk in Cowes and walk to the Jetty Triangle for a chat.

“That chat can last for 30 minutes to an hour. We talk about everything and what we have in common is love of our dogs.

“We all care about each other. If someone is missing one morning, we're all concerned.

“Recently Terry need an operation, so John drove him to Melbourne at 4am. These are very special guys,” Sally said.

The canine companions are now firm friends as well.

Chihuahua Winky, the group's wise elder might have slowed with



*Terry Allingham and Tash, Sally Matthews and Rosie, John Morrison and Lulu and Graeme Hampson and Winky have all become great friends after their morning walks together.*

age, but still rugs up and “can have a small walk and lots of talk” Sally said

Youngsters Lulu and Rosie – both under three and fit and active – keep

things moving, while fox terrier Tash has a gentler pace.

“She's under medication and has regular blood tests, but is doing really well,” said Sally.



# Just three months to council election

From page 2

Since then the State Government has declared Bass Coast a Distinctive Area and Landscapes (DAL) – which guides future land use – after local residents sent a loud message that there was too much development pressure on Phillip Island and San Remo, and growth should be managed.

With development pressures an issue for each council, key issues now will be focused on protecting town character, and creating planning controls to provide clear direction about long-term settlement boundaries.

Also, current councillors have debated that – by maintaining those boundaries – there is a flow-on impact to dense growth within boundaries, with Cr Stephen Fullarton fighting hard against planning permits for homes on “battle axe”, small blocks of land, under 500sq metres.

## Highway versus bridge toll

According to the Phillip Island and San Remo Visitor Economy Strategy, we should be encouraging tourists who stay and spend money, rather than day trippers who spend much less, if anything.

The strategy states the island already gets more visitors at peak times than our infrastructure can cope with: the island in January alone attracts about 28,600 visitors per day, above the ideal maximum capacity limit of about 24,500 visitors per day.

As such the strategy advocates a bridge toll, as an incentive for tourists to visit outside peak travel periods and contribute more to the local economy.

Towns on the Great Ocean Road have also mooted the idea of introducing a form of user-pays scheme for tourists – not locals – with money returned to the area’s economy to pay for major repair works such as roads and facilities.

In contrast, Regional Roads Victoria has approached landholders along the Phillip Island Road, with the idea of creating a four-lane highway across the island to deal with increasing congestion; although the roads authority does not address flow-on congestion issues in Cowes and other towns.

Linda Marston said she believed most locals were against a Gold Coast-style highway.

“There seems to be a lot of planning going on for a double lane highway all the way through and I’m not sure that is what residents wants,”

Linda said.

“We are not just a tourist destination but have a population that pay rates and this wouldn’t suit our needs. Councillors need to stick up for locals.”

## Transparency

Bass Coast Ratepayers and Residents Association president Kevin Griffin said consultation, community engagement and fiscal discipline were key issues for any council.

“They are ongoing and will have to be pursued by the next council,” Kevin said.

“This current council has turned out to be so disappointing, resembling the previous council, which was so secretive.”

Kevin added it was critical to “keep the council honest”.

After lobbying for livestreaming of council meetings for years, it was finally Coronavirus that forced council’s hand, which was welcomed by Kevin.

He described it as “a vast improvement in openness and transparency and will give a greater degree of accountability”.

Peter McMahon said it was crucial the next round of councillors maintained and improved transparency, especially around budget figures.

“There needs to be more honesty and clarity around budget figures,” Peter said.

## Garbage

Last month the Advertiser highlighted that Bass Coast ratepayers fork out more for garbage than almost any other Victorian shire.

According to council’s draft budget for 2020-2021 – released last month – households will pay \$496.50 for the privilege of kerbside waste removal.

This is an 11 per cent increase, up from \$449, following another 11 per cent hike the previous year.

In 2017-18 we paid \$374 for garbage charges.

Kevin Griffin said many ratepayers will be “shocked by the massive escalation” in contract costs (see separate story).

“And perhaps even more shocking is that most of the current councillors appear quite willing to wave these increases through largely unchecked, and they seem eager to avoid scrutinising council processes around the massive increases,” he said.

# Council condemned for garbage fee hike

Bass Coast Shire councillors are failing to act on behalf of ratepayers and properly scrutinise the “massive” price hike in garbage costs, according to a community watchdog.

Bass Coast Ratepayers and Residents Association president Kevin Griffin last week responded to the June council meeting where the draft 2020-21 budget detailed that households will pay \$496.50 for the privilege of kerbside waste removal.

This is an 11 per cent increase, up from \$449, following another 11 per cent hike the previous year. In 2017-18 we paid \$374 for garbage charges.

At the same meeting councillors voted on two massive price hikes in rubbish fees that have hit Bass Coast.

The first hike was for environmental monitoring of landfill sites at Rhyll, Grantville and Wonthaggi by contractors Meinhardt Infrastructure & Environment Pty Ltd.

A three-year contract from 2019 was originally for \$258,720, with the contractor now seeking an increase of \$171,943 over two years, which is a jump of more than 60 per cent.

The second hike was for \$1.83 million for recycling services by Wonthaggi Recyclers, including their management of Inverloch and Wonthaggi Transfer Stations and the continued collection and processing of recy-

clables.

According to Wonthaggi Recyclers the fee imposed by Visy Recycling for the shire’s recyclable materials has increased from \$100 per tonne to \$145 per tonne, or a rise of 45 per cent.

## Freedom of Information

In a letter to today’s Advertiser, Mr Griffin said many ratepayers will be “shocked by the massive escalation” in contract costs.

“And perhaps even more shocking is that most of the current councillors appear quite willing to wave these increases through largely unchecked, and they seem eager to avoid scrutinising council processes around the massive increases,” he said.

Mr Griffin said BCRA had instigated a Freedom of Information request last year following “frustration” at the increases but had received little information, adding he was “seeking the urgent release of these documents in order to further evaluate Council’s draft budget and the proposed garbage increase of \$46.60”.

“The association is concerned not only at the impost these cost increases will have on ratepayers, but it is also concerned by what appears to be a somewhat cavalier approach taken by some councillors in regard to foisting these higher costs onto ratepayers without due and proper scrutiny.”

Mr Griffin welcomed scrutiny by Cr Les Larke who successfully deferred the vote on Wonthaggi Recyclers, requesting advice on renegotiating the contract and “identifying the risks” associated with that.

But Cr Larke failed in his attempt to defer voting to investigate the discrepancy in environmental monitoring of landfill.

“Astonishingly, Island Ward councillors Pamela Rothfield and Michael Whelan, alongside Western Port Ward councillor Clare Le Serve, were in favour of waving the increase through based solely on the officers report and recommendation, and without further council scrutiny as to how this massive 45 per cent variation came to council,” he said.

Mr Griffin said association members had expressed their concern about the hefty ongoing increases to the annual garbage charge, which has increased from \$374 in 2017 to be \$496.60 in 2021. This is a massive increase of \$122.60, or 25 per cent, in just four years.

“But while Bass Coast Council has been adding hefty increases to its annual garbage charge, adjacent shires have been able to better manage these costs. For example, Surf Coast Council have increased their annual garbage charge by just \$63, or 15 per cent, for the four years 2017 to 2020.”

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# Calculating the cost of climate change

Health and economic impacts are vast says new report.

About 260 homes and 15km of roads in Bass Coast are at risk of sea level rises, while elderly residents can expect more heat-related deaths, according to a new shire climate change technical report.

The report provides a detailed analysis of climate change impacts on this region to 2100, particularly Phillip Island and San Remo, and forms part of draft actions for the shire's soon-to-be-released Climate Change Action Plan 2020-2030, currently seeking community feedback until July 12.

The shire has also released the results of a community survey – undertaken earlier this year – asking residents how worried they are about climate change impacts to Bass Coast, with the majority responding “extremely high”, stating rising sea levels and increased extreme heat days were causing the greatest concern.

In addition, results from a greenhouse emission audit of Bass Coast residents, business and the shire has found about 70 per cent of carbon dioxide comes from energy use – including 40 per cent from street lighting, which is followed by about 20 per cent from transport.

Among the actions to reduce emissions detailed in the draft plan include the possible creation of a community solar farm at the shire's newly-purchased 45 hectare land at Gap Road.

Last year Bass Coast Shire council joined other local governments by declaring a climate emergency, following a community petition – signed by more than 1,000 people – which has now led to the release of the technical report and draft actions, the most thorough snapshot ever done for the shire.

Using research from the Victorian Government and CSIRO, the report found that climate change impacts for Bass Coast will see:

- Health impacts, including an increase of insect borne pathogens, more heat-related deaths among the elderly and more stress on emergency services;
- Economic impacts: Loss of habitat related to major tourism infrastructure such as the penguins; while farm businesses will be affected by bushfire, flooding and soil runoff, with crop loss due to sun damage;
- Environmental impacts: rising sea levels, increased average temperature and solar radiation, extreme heat days, extreme storm events and storm surges, water scarcity and decreased annual rainfall.

## Sea levels

About 260 homes in Bass Coast would be exposed during a 1-in-100-year storm surge in 2070, however the report does not pinpoint which homes are under threat.

The report also calculated 15.3 kilometres of roads, and 18 kilometres of sewer and water drainage infrastructure will be at risk of the same event.

The report said from 1966 to 2009 the sea level rose by 2.1mm/year. Between 1993 and 2009 this rate increased to 3.1mm/year and “is expected to accelerate due to thermal expansion from heating and additional water from melting glaciers.

“As a coastal municipality



*The climate change report states that alongside rising sea levels – seen here last month in Cowes east – Bass Coast will face increased average temperature and radiation extreme heat days, extreme storm events and storm surges, water scarcity and decreased annual rainfall.*

Bass Coast is at risk from rising sea levels and storm surges, and riverine flooding of the Powlett and Bass Rivers,” the report said.

“BCSC has already begun to address this, pursuing Amendment C82 in order to introduce a Land Subject to Inundation Overlay (LSIO) for affected areas to ensure dwellings and infrastructure are future-proofed and plan for sea-level rise of 2100m (0.8m).”

Between 1910 and 2018 Victoria's average temperature increased by just more than 1C, which is expected to continue, largely dependent on global greenhouse emissions, bringing with it extreme and extended heat events and bushfire risk.

The report uses scientific modelling based on a global temperature rise from between 0.7C through to 5.4C by 2100, depending on whether greenhouse emissions can be reduced to 530 parts per million or a “business as usual” up to 1000 parts per million, (for hundreds of thousands of years prior to the industrial revolution the concentration of carbon was between 172 and 300ppm).

## Survey results

The shire conducted a community survey earlier this year, which received 370 responses.

When asked “how worried are you about the following climate change hazards for Bass Coast and its community?” responses were high, identifying rising sea levels and increased extreme heat days as the climate hazards causing greatest concern.

About 75 per cent of the comments (50 responses) were concerned with the downstream impacts climate hazards would cause on particular sectors, with 42 per cent concerned about environmental impacts such as biodiversity loss (particularly stress to native flora and fauna) and an increase of in-

vasive species.

About 10 per cent of respondents were concerned about the impact on the local economy, especially food security and the flow-on to increased food prices.

About nine per cent were worried about health and human services, including impacts such as insect-borne pathogens, and issues such as intergenerational inequality, and the displacement of people

## GHG audit

In addition to the survey, the shire earlier this year conducted an audit of Bass Coast's greenhouse emissions, from residents, businesses and the shire.

The results showed that in 2019 the community's net greenhouse gas emissions were 675,586 tonnes, with energy (268,747 tonnes) making the biggest chunk, followed by transport (200,811 tonnes), agriculture (180,360t), waste and industrial processes.

Emissions from the Bass Coast Shire are largely made up of energy use at 71 per cent, which includes 40 per cent from street lighting.

This is followed by 23 per cent from transport.

Bass Coast mayor Brett Tessari, said the community had already taken part in the early stages of the 10-year Climate Change Action Plan, by completing the survey or attending workshops.

“We are now reporting back to the community on the proposed draft actions, that were developed following the initial consultation phase,” Cr Tessari said.

“These draft actions have been developed to guide council and the community towards net-zero emissions and building a climate resilient Bass Coast.”

To view the draft actions, and to provide feedback go to [basscoast.vic.gov.au/climate-action](http://basscoast.vic.gov.au/climate-action).

The survey will close on July 12.

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## Council Update



### Have your say: Climate Change Action Plan

Council is looking for community feedback on the next steps of its Climate Change Action Plan 2020-30. Council has declared a climate emergency and is currently working with the community to develop the Climate Change Action Plan. The Plan will guide the community towards net-zero emissions while facilitating climate adaptation and urban resilience over the next 10 years. Draft actions have been developed following the initial consultation phase and these are now out for community feedback. To view the draft actions, and to provide feedback to help Council prioritise and refine these actions, visit [www.basscoast.vic.gov.au/climateaction](http://www.basscoast.vic.gov.au/climateaction). The survey will be open until Sunday, 12 July.

### Ordinary Council Meeting

Council's next meeting will be live-streamed at 1.00pm on Wednesday, 15 July 2020. Join us on the live stream link at [www.basscoast.vic.gov.au/2020meetings](http://www.basscoast.vic.gov.au/2020meetings)

The proposed items Council may consider:

- Planning Application 190055 - 103 Ventnor Beach Road, Ventnor
- Planning Application 190137 - 31 Silverleaves Avenue, Silverleaves
- Planning Application 190324 - Two lot subdivision and vegetation removal at 27 McRae Avenue Cowes
- Planning Scheme Amendment C150Basc - Consideration of Submissions
- Local Government Power Purchase Agreement
- Waste Services Contract Variation - Impact of Recycling Industry Processors
- Draft Governance Rules
- Local Law - Use of the Common Seal and Council Meeting Offences
- Community Asset Committees
- Delegated Committees
- Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation - Planning and Environment Act 1987
- Amendment to the report for the Award of Tender 20008 - Wonthaggi Railway Station Extension and Glazing

The agenda is released on Council's website on Friday, 10 July at [www.basscoast.vic.gov.au/2020meetings](http://www.basscoast.vic.gov.au/2020meetings). There is an opportunity during the Council meeting for public questions. If you would like to ask a question please submit your questions in writing no later than 24 hours prior to the meeting.

### Proposed Budget 2020/21

Council has prepared a proposed 2020/21 Budget for the financial year starting 1 July 2020 and ending on 30 June 2021. Council will consider the adoption of these documents at the Ordinary Council Meeting to be held on Wednesday, 19 August 2020.

#### Viewing the proposed Budget 2020/21

The proposed 2020/21 Budget is available online at [www.basscoast.vic.gov.au/budget](http://www.basscoast.vic.gov.au/budget) or to have a copy mailed to you please contact our Finance Team on 1300 BCOAST (226 278) or (03) 5671 2211.

The proposed Budget is also available to view at:

- Bass Coast Civic Centre (airlock), 76 McBride Ave, Wonthaggi
- Grantville Transaction Centre, 1504-1510 Bass Hwy

#### Asking questions and having your say

Due to the current COVID-19 pandemic we will not be holding any face-to-face consultation sessions. There are still opportunities to ask questions online or over the phone:

- **Over the phone:** Contact our Finance Team on 1300 BCOAST (226 278) or (03) 5671 2211
- **Email:** [basscoast@basscoast.vic.gov.au](mailto:basscoast@basscoast.vic.gov.au)

Under the provisions of *Section 223 of the Local Government Act 1989*, any person may make a written submission on any proposal contained in the proposed 2020/21 Budget. Any person lodging a submission may request to be heard in person in support of their submission. Submissions may be made available to the public. Submissions must be received by **5.00pm on Tuesday, 21 July 2020** and be addressed to The Chief Executive Officer, Bass Coast Shire Council, PO Box 118, Wonthaggi VIC 3995. Those persons requesting to be heard in person in support of their submission will have the opportunity to do so at a Special Meeting of Council at 11.00 am on Wednesday, 29 July 2020. This Meeting will be open to the public. The final 2020/21 Budget will be presented at the Ordinary Council Meeting on Wednesday, 19 August for adoption, along with the outcome of any submissions.

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





# New blood: improved pathology services

When Monash Health Pathology services were appointed last year to provide pathology services to Bass Coast Health and three other Gippsland health providers, it marked the start of a collaboration to improve the response to patients during an emergency.

The services have been working together and there is now a standardised protocol which outlines the procedure for blood products in urgent situations to facilitate major blood transfusions.

The Massive Transfusion Protocol is a structured approach for transfusing patients with critical bleeding and requiring a massive transfusion.

This means the blood products that are needed can be quickly provided at all the hospitals.

Bass Coast Health CEO Jan Child said the protocol was a great example of the advantages of health services uniting to benefit the community.

"We have a commitment to ensuring every patient will have urgent access to blood and blood products anywhere, anytime within the sub-region," she said.

Monash Health Pathology provides an on-call service to local hospitals, seven days a week, 24 hours a day.

Each health service has a supply of Emergency O Rh(D) Negative blood on site that can be used. If additional blood is required, it can be supplied from the laboratory at Wonthaggi Hospital.

Monash Health Pathology also has national accreditation for the innovative i-STAT devices that test a patient's blood by their bedside, resulting in a high-quality safe, testing environment at each health facility.

The accreditation is of the same level that equipment in a pathology laboratory is subject to.

Testing blood by a patient's bedside enables faster turnaround of pathology results, giving clinicians the information they need to make quicker decisions about a patient's care.

A pathology test will even detect if a patient has experienced a cardiac arrest.

The i-STAT devices are located at Wonthaggi Hospital's Emergency Department and the Health Hub at Cowes.



Sub-Regional Partnership Clinical Project Officer Amelia Tobias (left) and Monash Health Pathology Senior Scientist Stephen Griffiths have been driving improvements for access to blood and blood products.

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## Comforting news for breast cancer patients

A diagnosis of cancer is heart-wrenching for patients and their families.

That's why Bass Coast Health (BCH) is working to expand the range of cancer services available from Wonthaggi Hospital.

Over the last 12 months BCH has introduced on site chemotherapy services at Wonthaggi and said these continue to expand with the support of the BCH oncology and haematology doctors.

The doctors are employed by BCH and are an example of the important partnership between BCH and Alfred Health.

BCH said working with the doctors from Alfred Health will ensure the local service is capable of providing contemporary care locally, whilst also facilitating a pathway to the Alfred if patients require greater care.

As another important step in developing cancer services locally, BCH is now offering breast cancer surgery, with Alfred Health General Surgeon Dr Sarah Birks consulting and operating from Wonthaggi Hospital.

This means patients will no longer have to travel to Traralgon or Melbourne for surgical and oncological breast cancer treatment. For breast cancer patients, surgery to remove the tumour, either by lumpectomy or mastectomy, is usually the first step in treatment.

Dr Birks will be offering procedures such as lumpectomy and mastectomy at Wonthaggi, as well as surgical consultations.

"Patients will not have to travel and will be able to have their case assessed by a team of cancer experts from Alfred Health to ensure they receive the best tailored treatment possible," Dr Birks said.

"We are achieving better long term outcomes for breast cancer patients, so whilst the priority is always to perform safe cancer surgery, I also think it is important to focus on achieving an appearance that women will be comfortable with for a long time."

Dr Birks specialty areas are surgery for:

- Breast cancer: multi-disciplinary care, oncoplastic breast surgery and risk reducing surgery (skin sparing and nipple sparing mastectomy)
- Benign breast disease
- Thyroid surgery for benign and malignant disease
- Parathyroid surgery, including minimally invasive surgery.

Dr Birks will be supported by team members such as McGrath Foundation Breast Care Nurse Taryn Robinson.

An appointment with Dr Birks, will require a referral from a medical practitioner.



McGrath Foundation Breast Care Nurse Taryn Robinson (left) and Breast Surgeon Dr Sarah Birks in theatre at Wonthaggi Hospital for the start of breast surgery at Bass Coast Health.



# Gym site not “critital habitat” says report

Three endangered birds have been found to forage in Cowes Primary School's sanctuary, which is set for a new multi-million-dollar gymnasium. However the area is not considered critical habitat.

The critically endangered Swift Parrot, as well as the Grey-headed Flying-fox, “could occasionally forage in eucalypts in the sanctuary and school grounds”, according to documents provided by the Victorian Education Department to the Federal Department of Environment.

The documents state the threatened Powerful Owl “could potentially forage within the site”, but the school's sanctuary was “not considered to be critical habitat, as it only provides foraging and not nesting or roosting habitat”.

However while endangered species have scuttled other projects around Australia in the past, these findings seem unlikely to stop the much-anticipated gym, with an accompanying flora and fauna assessment report detailing a long list of measures to avoid and reduce impacts on habitat during construction.

In May, the Victorian Government fully-funded the project with \$4.95 million, further to the \$550,000 for planning and design received in the 2019-20 State Budget.

The documents state this single court gymnasium will impact 0.367ha of the sanctuary, with the school's council continuing to lobby for an upgrade to a second court which, if funding is made available, would add another 0.2ha.

In February about 250 people signed a change.org petition, titled “Save the last 2 hectares of remnant bushland in Cowes”, which was initiated by Marnie Chadwick, while her mother Sue Chadwick said she believed the endangered Swift Parrot lived in the bushland.

The petition, written for Education Minister James Merlino, states signatories “are appalled at the decision



Documents provided by the Victorian Education Department to the Federal Department of Environment state the gymnasium will impact 0.367ha of the sanctuary.

to construct a new large competition sized gymnasium” in the sanctuary, the “last known two hectares of remnant vegetation in Cowes, which is the habitat of native and endangered wildlife”.

## Endangered

As part of pre-construction planning, the Victorian Education Department has been required to refer the gym project to the Federal Department of Environment under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act, and the state's Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act.

The gym development triggered the referral because it will likely have a direct or indirect impact on listed species and their habitat.

An on-site inspection found 10 bird species, none listed as threatened or migratory.

However, a broader assessment found a total of 16 listed threatened

or migratory fauna species “had a low to moderate likelihood of occurrence/use of the school site”.

“There is a low likelihood of impacts on two migratory species, the Swift Parrot and Grey-headed Flying-fox,” the documents state.

“The Swift Parrot breeds in Tasmania, so there will be no disruption to breeding activities. The Referral Area only provides a very small area of potential foraging habitat for Swift Parrot that would only occasionally be used on migration from Tasmania to over-wintering habitat in northern Victoria.

“No key feeding tree species for Swift Parrot were however recorded in the Referral Area and it is likely to only make very occasional use of the site on its migratory passage.”

The documents state the Grey-headed Flying-fox – listed as vulnerable under the EPBC Act – is “highly



A report finds there is “a low likelihood of impacts on two migratory species”, the Swift Parrot (pictured) and Grey-headed Flying-fox from the school gym development.

mobile”, foraging over a large area away from roosting camps.

“While there are no camps present within the Referral Area, there is a camp located at HMAS Cerberus at Crib Point.

“The species may therefore occasionally use the foraging resources available on site.”

While the Powerful Owl could “occasionally” forage in the site, the school sanctuary was “not critical habitat” and “the species has been recorded foraging amongst mature eucalypts across Cowes”.

## Trees

The Education Department referral documents state less than half a hectare of vegetation will be impacted by the gym development, with no large trees or vegetation of high quality to be removed.

An accompanying report – Flora and

Fauna Assessment and Native Vegetation Impact Assessment for Cowes Primary School, by Practical Ecology, released in March – states while swamp gum will be removed, it is not a key feeding tree for Swift Parrot, although “they may occasionally use them”.

“The removal of these seven smaller trees will have minimal, if any, impact on foraging habitat for this species.

“The five larger Swamp Gums within the Bushland Sanctuary will be retained and protected during and after the development works.”

The sanctuary is zoned “public use education” and is not covered by any overlays, so does not require a planning permit from Bass Coast shire to remove vegetation, although the school will buy offsets through a Victorian Native Vegetation Credit Register.

“While the sanctuary itself provides moderate to good fauna habitat, there is only stepping stone habitat available connecting it to the wider landscape,” the flora assessment states.

“The sanctuary itself, and the development impact zone that occupies approximately one quarter of the sanctuary, is in good ecological condition and is the one remaining patch of bushland in the local area.”

## Minimise risks

The flora and fauna report details a long list of measures to avoid and reduce impacts on habitat during construction including:

- Cowes Primary should employ a zoologist to salvage and release fauna displaced during construction, and identify and inspect tree hollows likely to support fauna.

- Rubbish from construction and during operation should be regularly removed, while “No-Go areas” should be well defined and identified to all work crews.

- After construction, sports lighting will be set at the red end of the spectrum and directed downwards onto the playing court, to minimise potential impacts on nocturnal fauna.

## THANK YOU



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We have compiled this list with the aim of capturing (to the best of our ability) the individuals and businesses who provided us with all manner of donations... from chocolates for staff, to gloves and masks, to financial donations to help us purchase critical supplies and equipment. Every single donation has made a difference and not only does it improve health care but it further unites us as a community.

During a time when we have had to be physically distanced, this community has come together in ways that encapsulate a strong and united community.

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# Ronnie launches his council campaign

## From page 3

- Expanding the junior high school at San Remo to include a full year 7-12 high school, also teaching VCAL subjects;
- Invest in measures – ultimately a rock wall – to stop erosion from Cowes east through to Cowes west and possibly Ventnor. Ronnie says he supports council's 2019 motion to declare a climate change emergency but ultimately climate change is a global problem;
- Join bike tracks around the island, from Cowes to San Remo, Rhyll, Ventnor and the Nobbies;
- A car ferry terminal at the jetty continues to be a key plank in his election platform. He believes \$80,000 (as previously promised by council) should come from council coffers to contribute to a \$200,000 study of the Cowes jetty as a suitable location, with \$120,000 from the State Government. The jetty should also be expanded (roughly 25 metres) to allow cruise ships to berth.

Ronnie supports a regional skate park on the island, but rather than at Newhaven as is currently proposed, he believes it should be at the planned sports hub on the corner of the Ventnor and Phillip Island roads. He supports maintaining the current town boundaries but says "inevitably" they will need to be expanded at some point, given the popularity of Phillip Island.

He also believes four lanes should be expanded to at least San Remo "if not to the Grand Prix track", the bridge should be upgraded, while he says he is unconvinced by arguments that a highway across the island would make a giant bottle neck.

Ronnie continues to believe Phillip Island gets a raw deal and should stand alone.

"The island has been sorely done by for a long time. We raise most of the rates but we don't get the same return. Bass Coast Shire is very Wonthaggi-centric – it has got a new high school, new hospital and just

recently a university hub."

But surely Phillip Island has scored some victories in recent months, such as a transfer station, rebuilt Cowes Cultural Centre, transit centre, jetty triangle redevelopment, a community hospital and the proposed sports hub on the carnival land?

"I'll concede that some things have improved greatly, including from state and Federal government support.

"But the majority of councillors on Bass Coast come from off the island. "The island has different needs to the mainland, particularly tourism and the environment."

While Ronnie supports a new Cowes Cultural Centre, he believes current councillors have "wedged" the next council by demolishing it before new designs were finalised.

"Why pull it down before the new plans have been designed and shown to the community? How can they pluck a \$19 million figure out of the air for the rebuild when the plans aren't final?

"They have pushed ahead to wedge the incoming council."

More broadly, he continues to support pill testing at music festivals on the island, adding this was one of the main reasons he joined the Sex Party.

"My eldest was heavily involved with the music scene a few years ago and it always terrified me what harm could befall her," he says.

"I don't condone pill taking, but we won't stop it and so let's protect our young from dodgy drug sellers and maybe even convince the kids not to take them in the first place."

## Personal life

Ronnie grew up in Toorak and since 1977 has run his family business, Klepner's Fine Antique Jewellery on Little Collins Street in the CBD, where he continues to work three days a week.

He originally studied journalism at RMIT – and even had a stint as a presenter on what is now known as Triple J – but soon after worked at

Klepner's, which was started by his family in 1889.

He is president of the Gemological Association of Australia, on the board of the Jewellers Association, is the Australian representative on the World Jewellery Congress and one of five government-approved valuers.

Initially he wanted to buy a holiday home on the Mornington Peninsula, but bought his home in Cowes west in 1981 near the yacht club on the advice of his mother.

"It didn't take me long to fall in love with the island, the location, the seafront, and it wasn't as crowded or pretentious as other areas."

He says the island has seen "colossal" changes since the '80s, with the duplication of the highway "making a huge difference to the ease of getting here"

"The amount of people who have since moved to the island is enormous. I think they realise the island has so much to offer and they're embracing that."

His wife Nancie Robinson is a teacher and he has two children in their 20s, who work in Melbourne.

## Bruised and battered

Ronnie describes himself as "socially left of centre, but economically right of centre", not aligned to any party.

"I don't look left or right, but straight forward.

"I think politics should be kept out of council because we are a community and should work together."

He has rallied a "campaign team" in his bid to win the election, including a campaign manager and media support.

With the elections in October, he is launching his campaign with a mailbox drop in July, while his face will appear on billboards, including in Cowes cafes.

"I wouldn't say I'm keen, but I am committed.

"I'm going into this starry eyed and I have no doubt I'll come out bruised and battered."



The three-box set of documents for the Environment Effects Statement are each up to 400 pages.

# Plans for mega bay gas terminal released

Community and conservation groups say 40 business days is not enough time to scrutinise AGL's 10,000 page environmental assessment of its proposed gas terminal in Western Port.

So lengthy is the Environment Effects Statement, AGL has provided a five-page explanation on how to navigate the three-box set of documents, each up to 400 pages.

The EES is open for comment until August 26 for the project that will see a floating storage and regasification unit (FSRU), moored at Crib Point jetty.

The FSRU will regasify liquid natural gas by using a heat exchange system, taking in millions of litres of seawater per day, discharging it colder or warmer than the ambient temperature and containing residual chlorine.

AGL's plans would see liquified natural gas transported on up to 40 LNG super tankers – about 300 metres long and 49 metres wide – per year from interstate and overseas.

Save Westernport's Julia Stockigt said no country in the world had ever approved a floating gas terminal like AGL's close to a residential community, or in an environmentally sensitive wetland protected by international wildlife conventions.

She said that while the Victorian government had been willing to delay other planning processes because of COVID-19 restrictions, local community groups were still expected to participate in the complex EES process in semi-lockdown.

"Forty business days is not enough to properly scrutinise a plan that has taken several years to put together and is thousands of pages long, especially during the coronavirus pandemic that means the opportunity for proper public consultation is severely limited," Julia said.

"Nevertheless this is the public's best opportunity to have their voices heard by making a submission."

Environment Victoria community organiser Victor Komarovsky said the project would be a "recipe for environmental disaster and disrespectful to the local community".

"The EES consultation makes clear what is already obvious to us – that AGL's proposal risks destroying much of what we love about the bay, that it's going to hamper, not help the local economy, and that the vast majority of the local community outright rejects it," Victor said.

He said the EES process wasn't "easy for everyone to participate in", so Environment Victoria is hosting submission writing workshops on August 6 and 17 to help submitters understand the technical data and complete submissions.

"At up to 10,000 pages it speaks volumes about the risks involved. The complexity makes it impossibly difficult for the average person to engage in the process and dissuades a lot of people," he said.

"However this is one of the best chances the community has of being formally heard so we need to work together."

## EES

A quick search of AGL's EES summary states the seawater intakes and discharges from the FSRU "present potential risks to the

marine environment", including: plankton and other small organisms in seawater being drawn into the FSRU; the discharge of chlorinated seawater back into Western Port after electrolysis treatment; and when seawater discharged from the FSRU is cooler or warmer than the seawater in Western Port.

The EES states entrapment of small organisms, fish eggs and larvae were "predicted to be small relative to natural mortality".

"Significant implications on Western Port's ecosystem would be unlikely," the report states.

"The marine studies identified that fish eggs and larvae are most abundant in the North Arm of Western Port during spring and summer. The potential effects of entrainment on fish eggs and larvae would therefore be highest over spring and summer."

The EES states to reduce any impact the FSRU would operate on a reduced schedule between September and February.

It states the discharged seawater would contain chlorine-produced oxidants and products from the electrolysis of seawater, either cooler or warmer than the water in Western Port.

"Water temperature and chlorine associated with discharged seawater from the FSRU would not impact mangroves, saltmarsh, seagrasses and subtidal reefs, nor fauna such as waterbirds that use these habitats," it states.

However, it recommends that once the FSRU is operating, a marine monitoring program would "verify actual environmental impacts are not greater than predicted".

"If any unexpected circumstances are detected, appropriate action would be taken to meet the environmental responsibilities of AGL."

## What next?

The public has 40 business days to make a submission, closing at 11.59pm on Wednesday, August 26.

Go to [www.gasimportprojectvictoria.com.au/](http://www.gasimportprojectvictoria.com.au/) and follow the EES links.

Or receive the EES on USB media, or in hard copy.

Submissions will be reviewed by an Inquiry and Advisory Committee, formed by the Victorian Planning Minister Richard Wynne.

The IAC will review the public submissions, then hold a directions hearing on September 17, which will lead to a public hearing on October 12, to run for up to eight weeks.



An example of a floating storage and regasification unit and liquid natural gas ship. AGL's plans would see liquified natural gas transported on up to 40 LNG super tankers – about 300 metres long, 49 metres wide – per year from interstate and overseas. Image: Höegh LNG.



Bass MP Jordan Crugnale at the entrance to the Holden Proving Ground with members of Save the Holden Bushlands, from left, Tim Heffer, Meryl Tobin, Lauren Burns, Michael Nugent, Neil Rankine, Gerard Burns and Tim O'Brien.

# Save the Holden proving ground

Members of the community group Save the Holden Bushlands have met with the Member for Bass, Jordan Crugnale, to urge the government to act to protect the area.

The group met at the entrance to the proving ground, which has stood silent since GMH announced in February that it would cease operations in Australia.

A spokesman for Save the Holden Bushlands group, Tim O'Brien, said it was vital that those seeking to save the bushland acted quickly before it was sold for development or sand mining.

The group said last month a national commercial real estate company privately circulated a sales brochure for the 877-hectare site between Lang Lang and The Gardies.

The group wants public ownership of the site for the benefit and enjoyment of all Victorians and visitors with the Holden bushlands becoming the iconic entrance to Bass Coast.

Established by Holden in 1957, the proving ground is mostly remnant coastal forest, now rare in West Gippsland. In recent years, Holden worked with Bass Coast Landcare to manage and monitor the forest, which is home to several rare and endangered native species.

The site is currently zoned for farming and has no environmental overlays or protections. Rezoning the site and putting on environmental overlays to deter prospective buyers such as sand miners is seen as key to protecting it.

In May, Bass Coast councillors unanimously supported a motion to ask the State Government to buy the site for the preservation and recognition of its "environmental, cultural and coastal habitat values".

The Victorian National Parks Association is seeking government support to preserve the site as part of a wider Western Port biolink or national park.

Mr O'Brien said the first and most urgent step was to preserve the bushlands. Ultimately the group will advocate for nature link incorporating all conservation reserves and remnant bushland on the eastern side of Western Port.

The group is seeking meetings with GMH, MPs, Ministers, council, allied groups, potential benefactors, potential buyers and others.

The campaign is supported by a number of environmental and citizen groups, including the Victorian National Parks Association, Bass Coast Landcare, National Trust Bass Coast Branch, the Phillip Island Conservation Society, South Gippsland Conservation Society, Bass Coast Climate Action, the Healesville to Phillip Island Nature Link, Coronet Bay Ratepayers & Residents Association, the Tenby Point Ratepayers & Residents Association, the Westernport Swamp Landcare Group and the Cardinia Environment Coalition.



# Home is where the heart is Police hit the streets

Last week, Rhys Uhlich spoke to the Advertiser about building a unique and affordable home and the challenges and highlights of the project so far.

This week, he shares how it has not only provided an education in building techniques and processes, but has taken him on an intensely personal journey as well.

When Rhys, known for his modelling and television work, started sharing his stories of the build on his Instagram page, he said the reaction was instant, far surpassing any of the other things he posted.

In fact, the response was so big that the shed now has its own Instagram account, picking up 2000 followers in its first four days.

He shook his head. "I've never got as much traction on anything I've done in my life as when I started building this home," he said.

"To see the response I get and the messages I get, people are inspired not to just build their own home, but to live a different way.

"I try and get back to every single person. They've just poured their heart out to me and it's not because of me, it's because of what this build represents to them."

## An emotional journey

The family's own path to the shed was a convoluted one.

Several years ago, they sold their island home, packed up and headed to Los Angeles.

"That Surf Beach house was technically our dream home. We sold that to pursue my dream of a TV career," said Rhys.

"There we were in LA, living in an apartment with no furniture. It was the real Hollywood experience."

When Claire's mother got sick, the family returned to Phillip Island to start over.

They'd bought a block in Silverleaves from Rhys' family before leaving for LA, as a "kind of insurance".

Coming home, they lived onsite in a shipping container, and planned their next step.

"We looked at the volume builder route, but for us it felt very empty," Rhys explained.

"I grew up on this land and I wanted to honour it with something unique."

Rhys said the project to create a home has ignited a passion, proving him with the same creativity he was chasing in his Hollywood dream.

"If you're going to spend all your hard-earned cash on a house, it should inspire you."



Is this the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow? Rhys has shared every step of the journey to build his house from a shed on social media.

The impact of the Coronavirus has added another layer of perspective.

"Not to discredit the heart-break and financial things a lot of people are going through, so much about what is happening has liberated me to live how I've always wanted to live ... living simply and living off the land and what's around me."

He believes the pandemic has inspired many to simplify their lives and get back to basics.

"The amount of people during this time that are starting veggies gardens. It's beautiful in a way.

"It's almost like this thing going on in the world gave everyone permission to just be. To be grateful for what's around them.

"I felt really relieved I didn't have to have that travel bug. I didn't have to go anywhere. I could just enjoy being where I am. Obviously having this house build was such a blessing because I didn't have FOMO. I'm happy with what I've got and what I've got is enough."

He describes the change as "getting off the hamster wheel"

"People are empowering themselves again. I am realising how disempowered as a society we've actually been, and the veil's been lifted a little bit. It's kinda nice.

"I was in the creative arts field, but always thinking I needed to do this and if I didn't do that, I wouldn't have that. It's a bit scary when you first realise how much we are just going through the motions, it's disheartening."

Building the shed has liberated him from his old expectations and showed him the importance of letting your heart guide you.

"I've always been ashamed of living that way in a society that's about building things up, everything needs to be pre-planned and executed. I never fitted in that way.

"Letting your heart guide you, definitely means you get cut and torn along the way, but for me, there's no other way to live. I think it's the most rewarding way."

## Challenge yourself

For now, his heart is guiding him right to the shed and he's hoping he can inspire

others to make a similar leap of faith.

"There's so much about this build that emulates life and the way I think people could really benefit from living their lives but at the same time, it's such a scary thing to jump into.

"I really encourage people to build this way, but I think I have to preface by saying, it's going to challenge you. But you'd rather challenge yourself than someone else take control of it."

He describes the shed build as a portal for him to deliver a message to the world.

"There's something in this shed home that has symbolised a way that I think a lot of people want to live their lives. It's disarmed people.

"I think the deeper message is, we can be happier with less. And to take control back of our own lives but in a good way, in a creative sense.

"I still don't know if we'll pull this off. It looks great from the outside but the inside is not done yet. At the same time, that's the beauty of it, you never know. And if we do know and we plan everything to the nth degree,

what the point of being here?"

He said the response on social media shows "this thing has already been a success. We haven't even done the inside but it's already won".

"This shed build - if I'm completely honest, I've had nothing to do with it.

"I've just been a portal for it to happen. I truly believe that. It's taught me so much about myself.

"I'm someone who is always waiting for something to go wrong. This shed keeps defying those core beliefs within me. It just keeps going right.

"I have had to let the thing go wrong to then go right. This home's been my teacher in a lot of ways."

This intensely personal project might still have some new doors to open.

"We've documented this whole thing. From me going to America, to sleeping in the back of the car, then coming home with nothing.

"So, there's the potential to put a little doco together as well."

In the meantime, you can follow the project on Instagram @shedhouseaustralia.



Rhys Uhlich, pictured with wife Claire and daughters Mahli and Indah, with the concrete start of their house building journey.



"Letting your heart guide you, definitely means you get cut and torn along the way, but for me, there's no other way to live," said Rhys of his decision to follow his heart and build a unique and creative home.

You can expect to see more police on the streets in the coming weeks.

Acting Senior Sergeant Colin Shepherd said the CommConnect initiative is about increasing police visibility and helping build community confidence.

It will also see police visiting local schools and community groups to help them work together more effectively.

The increased police presence will be welcomed by many residents, as concerns grow over visitors ignoring social distancing measures and COVID restrictions (see separate story).

Snr Sergeant Shepherd said police continued to receive calls from the public reporting breaches of COVID restrictions.

Large numbers of people in Airbnb properties remained a concern. He said police continued to investigate all reports.

Under the current restrictions, commercial accommodation providers - and this includes Airbnb - are allowed to take bookings for groups of up to 20 people.

While no one from any of the current restricted postcode areas is allowed to go on holidays, police have confirmed they did not have the power of entry to search and identify everyone in a holiday rental property.

No infringement notices were issued over the weekend.

Snr Sergeant Shepherd said people should continue to report any concerns to the Police Assistance Line 131 444.

## Quiet weekend

Despite the usual reports about noisy parties, Snr Sergeant Shepherd said the weekend was relatively quiet.

He said there was an influx of people on the weekend, as had occurred since the restrictions eased several weeks ago, but generally people were well behaved.

Over the school holidays, he said police would continue to target bike safety.

"There are a lot of people riding without helmets and police will issue warnings and penalties as appropriate," he said.

In the past month, he said there had also been spasmodic and unrelated incidents of theft across the island, mainly from vehicles and trailers.

"It's a good reminder to lock cars and keep trailers and tools safely garaged. Don't leave tools unattended, unlocked or out in the street," he warned.

## Police ask - what's your concerns?

Victoria Police is currently conducting a survey to find out what's important to the local community.

The survey is an opportunity to let your local police team know about any safety concerns and safety improvement ideas you may have.

They're also looking to find out the level of trust and confidence for local police in our community.

"The survey is designed to give residents a greater voice in Victoria Police's ongoing efforts in creating a safer Victoria," the police website said.

Acting Senior Sergeant Colin Shepherd encouraged the community to take part.

"Think about your experience with the local police, and let us know your thoughts," he said.

To take part, visit: [engage.vic.gov.au/victoria-police-community-connection-project/victoria-police-bass-coast-south-gippsland](https://engage.vic.gov.au/victoria-police-community-connection-project/victoria-police-bass-coast-south-gippsland)

The survey closes on August 31.





# Don't get complacent

Residents and visitors should not be complacent about their risk of contracting COVID-19 as the number of daily cases in Victoria rises.

On Monday, Bass Coast Health CEO Jan Child said Victoria was at "a worrying crossroad", with 127 new cases reported.

This is on the back of the World Health Organization reporting a record increase in global coronavirus cases, with the total rising by 212,326 in 24 hours.

"The biggest increases were in the United States, Brazil and India, and just to provide some sobering facts, on Saturday, Brazil recorded more than 1000 deaths, the United Kingdom reported 67 deaths (bringing it to a total of over 44,000), and the USA hit 130,000 deaths in total, with a pretty awful projected trend line," Ms Child said.

"While Australia has been fortunate to not experience this level of tragedy so far, the potential for COVID-19 to have a more serious impact on our population – and our community – is still very real."

In the past week 204 tests were conducted at Phillip Island Health Hub.

"We still very much need people to front up for tests with even the slightest of symptoms. And whilst we know that there has been some delay in people getting results because of the increased testing across the state, it is still the right thing to do, even with the slightest of illness," Ms Child said.

There have been no changes to the

number of recorded COVID-19 cases among residents of Bass Coast with the reports still listing four cases.

"We cannot say for certain however, that there are no active cases. People can be asymptomatic and have the disease which makes community transmission risky," Ms Child said.

Ms Child is reminding the community that COVID-19 is "incredibly contagious" and people need to take responsibility for preventing its spread.

"It only takes one or two people going to work when they are sick, or to a restaurant, or to a public place, or to the supermarket, or to the coffee shop, doing the wrong thing by touching things that others will touch, coughing and spreading their germs in public, for this virus to take off," she said.

"The very contagious nature of the virus means it spreads extremely easily. Everyone must do the right thing."

To keep safe, people are being asked to do the right thing, which includes:

- Practising physical distancing. Keep at least 1.5m distance between you and others. No hugs and kisses when greeting others, no handshakes, no contact with others.

- Limit your interaction with others. The more people you see and the more often you see them, the more danger you are putting yourself and others in.

- Stay safe while out in the community. Avoid touching things that

others touch and sanitise your hands wherever you can.

- Know that people could be carrying COVID but also be asymptomatic. This means you should assume everyone might be carrying the virus.

- Stay safe at home where you can. That means only having face-to-face contact with those you really need to.

- Wash your hands as many times a day as you practically can, and for no less than 20 seconds each wash, being sure to get in between the webs of your fingers and under your nails.

- Practise good cough etiquette – into your elbow or a tissue.

- Understand and look out for the symptoms of COVID.

- Stay home and arrange to be tested if you have even the slightest of COVID-19 symptoms. Don't visit friends and family before you get tested, or after. Don't go for a coffee or lunch. Don't go on a short holiday with symptoms. Don't go to work. Just stay in your own home and organise to get tested.

- Continue to work from home where you can.

Testing is available at the Phillip Island Health Hub (24 hours a day) and Wonthaggi Hospital (10am-5pm, 7 days a week) and the Wonthaggi Medical Centre Monday to Friday (book by phoning 0492 036 568 or online: (phone 0492 036 568 or online: [www.hotdoc.com.au/medical-centres/wonthaggi-VIC-3995/wonthaggi-respiratory-clinic/doctors](http://www.hotdoc.com.au/medical-centres/wonthaggi-VIC-3995/wonthaggi-respiratory-clinic/doctors)).

# Cancellation refunds

The state government is offering up to \$225 per night for holiday bookings cancelled due to the lockdown of hotspot suburbs.

More than 300,000 Melburnians living in 12 postcodes are subject to strict stay at home orders until July 29, meaning many will be forced to cancel holidays they had previously booked at locations across the state.

Last week, the Advertiser reported a number of business had received cancellations from holiday-makers in hotspot areas.

However, the lockdowns of 12 postcode areas in Melbourne does not appear to have had a major impact on visitor numbers.

Bass Coast Shire Council said it wasn't possible to provide an accurate comparison to visitor numbers last year, as the Phillip Island Visitor Information Centre remained closed to face to face visits.

However calls to the Visitor Information Centre were up by 18 per cent, email enquiries were up by 52 per cent and they'd received over 50 enquiries through the online chat function on the Visit Bass Coast website.

Sally Matthews at Phillip Island Getaway said they had no cancellations, but had been fielding enquiries from people unsure if they should holiday.

She said some bookings have moved to late August.

While the government rebate was welcome news, Sally said the \$225 payment would not cover a night at high-end accommodation if a booking was cancelled.

Minister for Industry Support and Recovery Martin Pakula announced that payments from a \$5 million fund would be made available to regional businesses including motels, caravan parks and short-term rentals such as Airbnb properties that could demonstrate losses due to the new restrictions required to slow the spread of coronavirus.

Payments of up to \$225 per cancelled booked night will be paid, with conditions including that full refunds are provided and no cancellation fees are levied.

Businesses can register for the regional accommodation support fund at [www.business.vic.gov.au](http://www.business.vic.gov.au).

# A local COVID resource

A COVID-19 support booklet specifically aimed at the residents of Bass Coast and South Gippsland is now available.

Bass Coast and South Gippsland councils have worked with the Latrobe Health Assembly and the South Coast Primary & Community Partnership to develop the booklet.

It contains information about local financial support, health referrals and support services, plus how to access psychosocial support, food and essential supplies.

There is also a list of additional support for those experiencing issues with housing and homelessness.

Community, multicultural, disability and Aboriginal support services are also listed.

In a joint message, the CEOs of both councils said: "We would like to thank the community for the support they are providing to each other and to also extend our thanks to service providers who have continued to support the community through these difficult times."

The booklet is available from [bass-coast.vic.gov.au](http://bass-coast.vic.gov.au) and will be regularly updated to ensure the information is current and correct.



A booklet outlining local support services for COVID-19 is now available from Bass Coast Shire Council's website.

[bass-coast.vic.gov.au](http://bass-coast.vic.gov.au) and will be regularly updated to ensure the information is current and correct.



Shoppers at Coles were greeted with empty shelves after workers at the Laverton distribution centre tested positive to COVID-19, reducing the number of deliveries out to stores.

# Shelves bare again

Shoppers at Coles in Cowes were greeted with empty shelves over the weekend, with fresh produce and meat sections of the store empty.

Like many stores across the state, the Cowes supermarket has been impacted by reduced deliveries from the Coles Laverton distribution centre.

A number of team members of the chilled distribution centre tested positive to COVID-19 and all workers employed at the facility were tested.

A spokesperson for Coles said as a result, a "significant proportion of team members at the Laverton distribution centre have been asked to self-isolate at home".

"Coles has extensive safety protocols in place at the Laverton distribution centre which comply with government guidelines, and the facility has been deep cleaned daily over the past week," the spokesperson said.



"This has temporarily impacted our ability to replenish our Victorian stores with chilled and fresh produce lines."

"Our team is working hard with our suppliers to replenish our stores

as soon as possible, and we apologise to customers of our Victorian stores who may find some chilled and fresh produce lines are temporarily out of stock."

Coles has re-introduced the two-item limit on products, including fresh milk, cheese, butter, margarine, chicken breasts and thighs and pre-packed carrots and potatoes.

The two-item limit also applies to canned tomatoes and beans, canned vegetables; pasta sauce, canned fruit, canned baked beans and spaghetti and canned meat, as well as frozen fruit and vegetables.

These limits are in addition to the existing two-item limits on pasta, mince, flour, eggs, hand sanitiser, UHT milk, sugar and rice, reintroduced on June 24.

There is a one package limit on toilet paper and paper towels.

# Visitors flout the rules

Locals who have worked hard to follow COVID-19 restrictions were last weekend frustrated at clear breaches by visitors.

Wintry weather over the school holidays has seen Phillip Island and San Remo inundated with tourists and while many respected new restrictions, in the midst of Victoria's potential second wave, many clearly flouted rules.

Supermarkets were packed with shoppers, meaning little if any social distancing, seeing one immune-compromised Cowes resident comment he was "afraid to go to the supermarket again".

"I went to Melbourne for two days and it would have been much safer shopping there than here," he said.

"There's just such a mass of people shopping here daily during school holidays, when only a little while ago supermarkets were limiting numbers."

The tourists were a boon for struggling businesses, but also underscored double standards: while they work hard to follow restrictions, visitors were failing to.

Most local businesses had signage and hand sanitising stations at the front of the store and restricted the number of people allowed in at one time.

Not all customers appreciated the precautions.

"It's a condition of entry that you use hand sanitiser when you enter our

store. You are not a victim everyone has to do it," posted Cape Winds in San Remo on their Facebook page.

"I don't mind but the virus loves it if you don't. You can storm out if you like that's your prerogative."

At gyms local residents – who have assiduously been disinfecting and wiping used equipment – reported visitors failing to do so.

One Cowes gym goer said she was forced to reprimand a large group at a Cowes gym for not once spraying down surfaces they had been sweating and breathing heavily over.

"We've been lucky to have only had four cases in Bass Coast, but after this weekend, seeing people not care and be so relaxed, it feels like it's a matter of time before we have an outbreak," she said.

Residents reported Airbnb homes packed with cars, with up to eight in one holiday residence.

One tradie said he had worked harder in the past fortnight "than I've ever worked" and was surprised to be called out to holiday homes with 20 guests.

"I can't have a birthday for my elderly mum of more than five people but because the Airbnb is a commercial business, they're allowed 20 people."

"No one is policing where they are from. The person who books could be from Kew, but the rest could be from Broadmeadows."



# Don't endure your COVID-19 anxiety alone

That's the message from Bass Coast Health.

The community is experiencing upheaval during the COVID-19 pandemic: people are isolated from family and friends, and many are without jobs and facing an uncertain future.

With the recent increase in positive test results, people are concerned about contracting COVID-19 and what happens if they do.

This can cause anxiety that impacts on mental health and well-being, with people experiencing a range of emotions such as stress, worry, boredom or low mood as a result.

At Phillip Island Health Hub's Urgent Care Centre, staff have reported an increase in the number of patients presenting with anxiety related to COVID-19.

Bass Coast Health (BCH) Team Co-ordinator of Counselling, Cara Hammond, is reminding people experiencing anxiety they are not alone and there are ways they can relax.

"My motto is 'Water, fresh air, sunshine and wriggle your toes in the grass - connecting with the environment,'" she said.

"Get some sunshine on your face and listen to nature - rain, the birds, wind, the ocean, whatever is nearby. 'Exercise is important and so is eating healthy meals.'"

Ms Hammond suggested trying activities you have not tried before and turning to YouTube for tips.

"There's even the TV show 'Aerobics Oz Style' now on 10 Play. It's just about finding what interests you," she said.

Initially the public's phone calls to BCH's counselling team related to anxiety about COVID-19, but now people are concerned about society returning to normal too soon and risking a second wave of COVID-19



Bass Coast Health (BCH) Team Co-ordinator of Counselling, Cara Hammond, is reminding people experiencing anxiety they are not alone.

infections.

"We have to remind ourselves that it's normal to be concerned and stressed. There is so much uncertainty because we do not have an end date."

Learning the facts about COVID-19 can help. Tune into trusted sources of information such as the Department of Health and Human Services (<https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus>) and Bass Coast Health (<https://www.basscoasthealth.org.au/>).

To book counselling with Bass Coast Health, phone the Access Team on 5671 3175. Alternatively, phone Lifeline on 13 11 14 or Beyond Blue on 1300 22 4636.

## Tips for staying mentally healthy

1. Maintain a healthy lifestyle:
  - Have a daily routine. Plan activities that are fun (such as reading, watching movies and hobbies) and give you a sense of achievement (such as cleaning, completing work tasks, learning a new skill).
  - Stay active - create an exercise routine that can be done at home to maintain physical fitness and reduce stress.
  - Eat well - plan and eat nutritious meals.
  - Stay connected with friends and family via phone, chat, email or video conferencing.
2. Stay informed. Information from trusted sources can help you determine reasonable precautions to take to maintain your health.
3. Stay positive. Remember this time will pass. What you say to yourself is important.
4. Challenge your negative thoughts by asking yourself what evidence you have that you 'can't cope'? Whenever you recognise a negative thought, balance it with a realistic thought.
5. Access support if you're feeling overwhelmed.
7. A good antidote to stress and worry is to get active and organised. If you are worried about something, do something. Make plans and write your list of what you need to organise and do it.
6. Remember who you are and your values. Stressful times can make it challenging to act in the way that is aligned with our values. Be gentle, kind, and respectful to yourself and to others.
7. Remember things will return to normal. In addition to maintaining long-term goals, think about things you will do each day and week, which you enjoy.

Source: The Federal Government website Head to Health.



Mark Underwood from Local.Clothing with Chris Ross, President of the Phillip Island Football Netball Club. Sales of local beanies and hoodies in June raised \$1040 for the club.

## Local support for footy club

After facing a tough season, the Phillip Island Football Netball Club has received some great local support.

The club was presented with a cheque from Local.Clothing for \$1040, after partnering with the clothing company in June to help raise much needed funds.

With this year's senior competition abandoned and junior teams playing a shortened season, the club's finances have taken a battering.

So, the cheque from Local.Clothing is very timely.

Local.Clothing's unique community partnership model means each month a designated group receives 10 per cent of the company's monthly turnover.

Company founder Mark Underwood said Local.Clothing partnered with the Football Netball Club after President Chris Ross explained they had lost the majority of their income from sponsorship, memberships, entry fees and canteen.

"They really rely on local support to keep 700 plus players on the field and court," Mark said.

The partnership came just in time for a new range of merchandise.

"We received some requests for winter gear, so decided to launch the Beacon Beanie and Logo Hoodie," Mark explained.

"We sold out of the beanies in 24

hours and have already sold over 100 hoodies."

The sales raised \$1040 for the club, which is Local.Clothing's biggest fundraiser so far.

To date, they've partnered with the Woolamai Beach Surf Life Saving Club, Change for Sam, the Phillip Island National Surfing Reserve and the Phillip Island CFA.

After going into hiatus when the Coronavirus pandemic first hit - "as we knew a lot of people were in financial hardship" - Local.Clothing has reactivated its community partnership campaign.

In July, they will partner with Phillip Island Landcare, to help raise funds for equipment and an honour board.

The honour board will be hung in the new Landcare shed at the Koala Conservation Park, to recognise the work and dedication of members since the group formed in 1987.

"We hope to get more nominations in from the public for the next few months," Mark said.

If you know of a community group that could use a helping hand, or would like to nominate your own group, email [hello@local.clothing](mailto:hello@local.clothing) or complete the nomination form at [www.local.clothing](http://www.local.clothing).

Any community group needing funds in the Bass Coast area can apply.

## To mask or not to mask: that is the question!

While masks can play an important role in preventing the spread of coronavirus, the 'gold standard' defence against COVID-19 is still social distancing and hand-washing, says President of the Rural Doctors Association of Australia, Dr John Hall.

It is critical that all Australians continue to follow these measures diligently, the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM) and Rural Doctors Association of Australia (RDAA) said.

"Social distancing remains the trump card against COVID-19 - you can't get anything stronger than that for virus protection" Dr Hall said.

"While some rural Australians might think they are a long way from Melbourne, there is every possibility that coronavirus can spread - particularly with the school holidays upon us - so extra care is a must at this time.

"We agree wholeheartedly that wearing masks when out and about in COVID-19 hotspots is important.

"And while COVID-19 remains with us, wearing masks on public transport (and at other times you can't avoid closely-packed groups of people) is a good precaution - even in locations outside the hotspot areas.

"With evidence of community spread (including the potential movement of infected people out of hotspot areas) some general practices and other health services may also ask patients to wear a mask while in their waiting rooms and when seeing their clinicians.

"But don't be mistaken - wearing



President of the Rural Doctors Association of Australia, Dr John Hall, said while he supports the use of masks, the gold standard of defence against COVID-19 is still social distancing and hand washing.

a mask is not your golden ticket to COVID-19 freedom.

"Even if you choose to wear one, maintaining stringent social distancing and hand hygiene is an absolute must. Masks are an added level of protection - not a replacement for other precautions."

ACRRM President, Dr Ewen McPhee, said: "A crucial time to wear a mask is if you suspect you have COVID-19, as wearing a mask greatly reduces the likelihood you'll spread the virus.

"But even then, please don't turn

up unannounced at your local general practice. Ring ahead first to find out what you should do.

"Generally, if you are experiencing a cough, runny nose, fever or other coronavirus symptoms, we will recommend you get tested first and self-isolate while you await the results.

"If you have symptoms, you should definitely wear a mask on your way to and from getting tested - particularly if you have to catch a cab or public transport, or know you'll be in close proximity to people on the way.

"Until you receive a negative test result, it is also important to wear a mask in your own home, if you share the house with other family members.

"And if you end up needing to go to your local general practice or hospital with COVID-19 symptoms, pro-actively wearing a mask on your way there - and once you arrive - is also essential."

If you wear a mask, you will need to ensure you are wearing it properly. This includes:

- putting the mask over your nose and mouth (not just your mouth)
- adjusting the nose band to ensure the mask is sitting properly over your nose
- tying the mask properly at the back of your head and neck (or using the elastic properly)
- making sure you don't touch the outside of the mask when taking it off
- discarding the used mask in a bin, and then washing your hands thoroughly (or sanitising them with an alcohol-based sanitiser) before you touch anything else.

## Mayor's Message

by Cr Brett Tessari

We all received a stark reminder last week that the pandemic is not over, and we all need to do more to help stop the spread of COVID-19. Following state government announcements, 10 postcodes have essentially been locked down for the next four weeks, in an effort to curb the increasing number of infections we are seeing every day.

While this doesn't include us, it could if we don't continue to observe social distancing and only leave home if we really have to. If you feel unwell, or have any symptoms, no matter how minor, please get tested. There is no room for complacency. Although there is no need to panic, we do need to remain cautious and keep listening to the directions from the Chief Health Officer and the state government about what we need to do to stop this virus.

The Holden Proving Ground, located in Lang Lang, holds an important place in the hearts of the local community, not just for its role in Australia's motoring history, but also for its incredibly important natural environment. It was used for many years to test our famous Aussie cars, including, I'm led to believe, some of Peter Brock's winning vehicles.



It is an area of significant environmental value and many in the community are requesting that all levels of government come together to put in place appropriate protections, so that the area can be enjoyed by people and wildlife for many years to come.

Here at Council, we will continue to advocate to the state and Federal governments and other departments to protect this fragile and rare environment. We will also continue to think outside the box on this issue, to work out what the best solution could be for the community, our local economy and the environment including all the flora and fauna that call this piece of significant bushland home.



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# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Tell us your views with a 'Letter to the Editor', (350 word limit). Email [advertiser@pisra.com.au](mailto:advertiser@pisra.com.au)

## Whale sculpture

If I recall correctly about \$18,000 of ratepayers money was spent on a white Italian marble sculpture depicting a whale and its calf and installed on the lawn area of the new Jetty Triangle.

In the last week this very expensive sculpture has been totally devalued by the addition of a large surrounding square of incongruous blue "matting", presumably to represent the sea. Not only is this hideous blue matting an unsympathetic colour, insensitive to its surroundings, but it is very poorly installed. It is even worse than the green matting that preceded it. I am sure that neither was intended by the sculptor who must be more incensed than I at such an insensitive solution to trimming the grass around the artwork.

Shame Bass Coast Shire for stuffing up a very expensive work of art. Remove the matting and restore the sculpture from being our most recent eyesore. What next Bass Coast Shire – surround it with a multi coloured wooden picket fence to keep everyone away from it?

W. Stanley, Cowes

## Hopeful or hopeless?

Hope has two beautiful daughters, Anger and Courage. Anger at how things are, Courage to make change. Thus spoke St Augustine of Hippo, 354-430AD. Anger is about low income people shivering and starving in winter, now saved by EUF (Environmental Upgrade Finance).

What an age of fear, despair and cynicism, as in Make America Great. Demonising "them" is easier than thinking for ourselves. Despair leads to violence, either outwards, with aggression against society, or inwards, resorting to self-destruction, evident in epidemics of drug abuse and suicides.

Hope is in the Climate Crisis Plan by the Shire. More of us are now able to be warm and comfortable, healthy and wholesomely fed. Background news is not good, with Federal LNP strangled by losing so much money, on drought, bush fires and now COVID19 induced economic collapse; also huge defence budget and big corporate tax cuts.

Here's a way to defibrillate the economy as we emerge from backside of COVID19.

Many plans previously looked interesting until you realise you can't afford them. Easiest example to consider is rooftop solar PV. For those who can afford, there are financial incentives, recognising years of reduced emissions and load taken off ageing coal fired grid. Now EUF delivers more than incentives, at much lower price under energy.gov.vic.au initiative. Not just solar, also high efficiency heat pumps, for room or hot water, house draft stopping, thermal insulation and whatever shows return on cost.

Finance comes from recognised banks but nothing like personal loan. Interest rates are very low, additionally finance term is long, five to

20 years. So repayment instalments are even affordable for low income people. And if that's not already too good to be true, it works for rental tenants as well as owner occupiers. Local government receives instalments, as line item on rates notice, handled the same way as garbage charge – too easy. You can even escape if necessary because EUF stays with the property.

How good is this? Real hope, economic stimulus, right down at community level, practically no bowing and scraping to officialdom?

Bernie McComb, Cowes.

## Who loses?

One of the most notable morning events in regional Australia is about to disappear as a result of a simplistic pecuniary argument.

The ABC quarter-to-eight radio news bulletin is about to be pulled to help balance the public broadcaster's budget and Managing Director David Anderson said the level of radio news would be retained.

This will be achieved, he added, with a 10-minute bulletin at 7am and a new five minute bulletin at 8am.

One wonders if the 7.45am news has been selected to go because it is the most important bulletin across the country and will affect the largest number of people, thus highlighting the devilishness of the Federal Government in cutting ABC funds.

The sound of the ABC's introductory Majestic Fanfare for the most important morning news bulletin has been an age old time signal for listeners; get up and get going, milking is over so now get to the real farm work, the school bus is coming and it's time for the washing to be out on the line.

If the question is ever asked do many people listen to the quarter-to-eight bulletin, just ask Steve Price, 3AW's program director for years.

3AW has dominated the early morning and daytime airwaves for years and what had always annoyed Price was that his station never bettered that ABC 7.45am time slot.

So will our morning loss help save the ABC's \$1000m budget or are we just a pawn in a bigger Federal Government v ABC game?

Derek Scales, Ventnor

## Shocking cost escalation

Many ratepayers will be shocked by the massive escalation in contract costs announced by Bass Coast Shire Council's meeting last month. This council is moving to pass on almost \$2million in costs to ratepayers following requests from private contractors.

Perhaps even more shocking is most of the current councillors appear willing to wave these increases through largely unchecked and seem eager to avoid scrutinising Council processes around the massive increases.

The Council reports we should expect further requests for increases in the years ahead.

There are two contract variation

requests from Wonthaggi Recyclers totalling more than \$1.8million.

Astonishingly, some councillors were in favour of waving the increase through, without further scrutiny of this massive 45 per cent variation.

Fortunately, a motion was passed to seek further advice on options to renegotiate the increase, as well as identifying the risks associated with re-negotiating the existing contract.

Then ratepayers were slugged with a massive \$172,000 increase (66 per cent) in the cost of an environmental monitoring contract due to flawed tender specification.

To the detriment of ratepayers, the majority of councillors decided to wave this through without further scrutiny.

Bass Coast Ratepayers and Residents Association is concerned not only at the impost these cost increases will have on ratepayers, but by a somewhat cavalier approach taken by some councillors to foisting these higher costs onto ratepayers without due and proper scrutiny.

And for many ratepayers, the current 10-year waste management contract is a particularly galling legacy of the previous council.

BCRRA members have expressed their concern about the hefty ongoing increases to the annual garbage charge, which has increased from \$374 in 2017 to be \$496.60 in 2021. This is a massive increase of \$122.60, or 25 per cent in just four years.

Frustrated by these increases, BCRRA lodged a Freedom of Information (FOI) request on 1st June 2019. To date the Association has received only some of the information requested.

Last month BCRRA wrote again to CEO Ali Waste requesting that the outstanding documents be released under FOI, in order to further evaluate Council's draft budget and the proposed garbage increase.

Kevin Griffin, BCRRA President

## A changed world

The COVID-19 virus has changed the world in many different ways. How is our community going to recover? Some people believe that the engine powering the recovery should be government – federal, state and local. Bass Coast Shire is playing its part through measures such as business and community grants and rate deferrals. The federal government has Job Seeker and Job Keeper. The state government is allocating money towards public service jobs and sports facilities. These measures can only go so far. Governments can't spend their way out of the situation. Nor can they tax their way out of it with so many out of work through no fault of their own. The engine that will have the most lasting effect will be business. Industries such as hospitality and accommodation have been hit particularly hard. Doing everything possible to allow businesses to get back to work will be the best thing that we can do.

This is a personal opinion.

Julian Brown, Inverloch

gencies, including the 2020 bushfires where he was deployed to Omeo to assist with the road crash rescue response, or working with the South Barwon SES during a recent tornado.

His colleagues described Michael's contribution to the State Emergency Service (SES) as "tireless".

"His extensive knowledge, capability and experience has translated into excellent leadership. As a leader, Michael ensures the unit is well managed, with a friendly, approachable manner and a seriously good sense of humour."

Michael was also a finalist for this year's Bass Coast Citizen of the Year.



A small group met to welcome the new president and board of Rotary – Back: Bill Young, Brian Holloway, Keith Gregory, John Tennant, Frank Biviano and Max Zelman. Front: Judy Lawrence and Stevie O'Reilly.

# New Rotary President

The Rotary Club of Phillip Island and San Remo has appointed Keith Gregory as their new President.

This is Keith's third time as President of the club.

"Normally we have a big function each June to formalise the end of the current President's term in office and to welcome in a new President, this is called the Changeover," said outgoing President John Tennant.

The event would normally have 60 – 80 people made up of club members, past members, family, friends, District Officers and dignitaries.

Current meeting restrictions

meant that this was impossible but a small group of members gathered at the club's new storage shed to mark the occasion, perform some formalities, introduce the new President and the new board.

The President and board for 2020/21 are:

Keith Gregory (President), Bill Young (Community Director), Brian Holloway (Youth Director), Frank Biviano (Vocational Director), Max Zelman (Club Secretary), Judy Lawrence (Club Treasurer), Stevie O'Reilly (International Director) and John Tennant (immediate past President).



Bec Daniher and Coles Chief Operations Officer Matt Swindells with the iconic FightMND beanies. Over 700 beanies were sold in Cowes as part of this year's Big Freeze fundraiser.

# Islanders supports MND

In May, part-time Cowes residents Bruce and Margaret McCorkell asked the local community to support this year's Big Freeze fundraiser and buy a blue beanie.

Islanders heeded the call and raised over \$15,000 for the campaign, with over 700 beanies sold from Coles in Cowes.

Across the country, shoppers at Coles raised \$5.2 million to help find a cure for Motor Neurone Disease.

The iconic blue beanies are usually sold at the "Freeze at the G" event at the game between Collingwood and Melbourne on the Queen's Birthday weekend, but Coronavirus restrictions meant this year's event couldn't go ahead.

Helping sell the beanies is a personal crusade for Bruce and Margaret.

Their son-in-law Neale Daniher, former AFL player and coach, was diagnosed with MND seven years ago.

The couple are closely involved in the annual Big Freeze campaign, from helping select the beanie design down to packing beanies in the warehouse to ship out to stores.

Coles CEO Steven Cain said it was the supermarket chain's single biggest fundraising event ever. The \$5.2 million

raised in their stores helped take the total funds for this year's Big Freeze 6 campaign to \$11.9 million.

Coles raised \$5.2 million in six weeks from the sale of beanies and Coles Brand fresh pork, donations from customers and Coles' Aussie pork farmers.

Coles also donated 10 cents from the sale of each pack of Coles Brand fresh pork over the six weeks of the campaign, while Aussie pork farmers donated further funds.

Coles Group CEO Steven Cain thanked all customers who purchased a beanie for \$20, with all proceeds directed to fund world-leading MND research in Australia and overseas to find a cure for the terminal and aggressive neurological disease.

"There is nothing quite like the passion the community has for an event like the Big Freeze and the admiration Australians feel for Neale Daniher, his family and everyone at FightMND who have dedicated themselves to helping fight the beast that is Motor Neurone Disease," Mr Cain said.

An average of two Australians are diagnosed with MND every day, while another two succumb to the disease.

Find out more at [fightmnd.org.au/](http://fightmnd.org.au/)

# Who's your local hero?

The Victorian Regional Achievement & Community Awards have been launched for 2020 and one local resident has already secured a nomination.

Michael Kenny from Cowes has been nominated as an "Australian Community Hero" for his work as the Unit Controller for San Remo SES.

His role as unit controller includes recruitment and training of members, working with Victoria SES staff and other agencies, managing the

unit's facilities and equipment and ensuring their finances are in order.

He also maintains the unit's records and works with the community for a range of events, including Walk for Kids and the San Remo Fishing Festival.

Michael is a familiar face at local events, where the SES showcase their equipment and skills to the public.

On top of his role with the San Remo unit, Michael also works with other SES units during times of emer-

• Ricoh Australia Customer Service Award

• Awards Australia Community Hero Award

• GOTAFE Community Group Award

• GOTAFE Community Education Award

To submit a nomination, go to [www.awardsaustralia.com/vic/rca](http://www.awardsaustralia.com/vic/rca)

and select 'Nominate Now'. Alternatively, call the awards team on 9720 1638 and pass on your nominee's details and they will take it from there.

Nominations close Friday, July 31.

For assistance please call the Awards Office on 9720 1638 or email [vic@awardsaustralia.com](mailto:vic@awardsaustralia.com)



DEATHS

**BRIERLEY, James Clifford:**  
20/9/1924 – 29/6/2020  
Jim died peacefully with his loving wife Barbara by his side.  
He was a remarkable and adventurous man.  
Jim was much loved and will be missed by his family  
Zeb, Anne, Stephen, Moira, Finn and Ruari.  
**‘A True Gentleman’**

**DAVY, Patricia:**  
30/6/2020  
Deepest condolences to all the family of our cherished friend Pat.  
A lady who gave of herself to all, expecting nothing in return.  
Out of sight not out of mind  
Kris & Denis Anderson

**DAVY, Pat:**  
Thank you for being a wonderful friend.  
I will miss you so much.  
Joy Williams

**DAVY – Patricia Ann (Pat)**  
Passed away peacefully at home on June 30, 2020.  
Aged 87 years  
Beloved wife of Keith (dec.).  
Mother and mother-in-law of Mark & Di, Linda & Malcolm, Peter, Margrette & Brendan.  
Grandmother of 8 grandchildren and great grandmother of 10 great grandchildren.  
Dearly loved

**DOWSETT, Jennifer:**  
We did not have time to say goodbye. Our dear friend of 36 years, we've been through happy times and sad times together, grieved with you and celebrated with you, we thought you were bullet proof. Can't express how much we will miss you.  
Our sincere condolences and love to partner Fred, Son Rhys, Daughter in Law Michelle and Grandson Joseph, she loved you all.  
Remembered with much love by Maureen, Peter, Allison, Daryl and family, Andrew Kerry and Family.

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**EDITORIAL GUIDELINES**  
The Advertiser conducts its journalism in accordance with the guidelines of the Australian Press Council.  
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Accuracy and clarity  
1. Ensure that factual material in news reports and elsewhere is accurate and not misleading, and is distinguishable from other material such as opinion.  
2. Provide a correction or other adequate remedial action if published material is significantly inaccurate or misleading.  
**Fairness and balance**  
3. Ensure that factual material is presented with reasonable fairness and balance, and that writers' expressions of opinion are not based on significantly inaccurate factual material or omission of key facts.  
4. Ensure that where material refers adversely to a person,

a fair opportunity is given for subsequent publication of a reply if that is reasonably necessary to address a possible breach of General Principle 3.  
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5. Avoid intruding on a person's reasonable expectations of privacy, unless doing so is sufficiently in the public interest.  
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**Integrity and transparency**  
7. Avoid publishing material which has been gathered by deceptive or unfair means, unless doing so is sufficiently in the public interest.  
8. Ensure that conflicts of interests are avoided or adequately disclosed, and that they do not influence published material.

IN MEMORIAM

**Hamilton, Neil:**  
11.07.2000  
Those we love don't go away ... they walk beside us every day ... unseen, unheard but always near.  
Still loved, still missed and very dear.  
Love Heather & family x

PUBLIC NOTICES

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

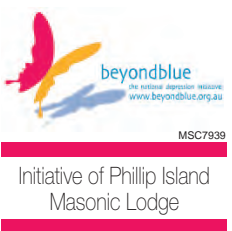
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**Matthew 5:14, ESV**

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The new Metricon Alto home is now on display in Grantville.

# Metricon display in Grantville

Metricon Homes has recently unveiled an exciting new display home in Grantville. The innovatively designed Alto is part of the Freedom by Metricon range and challenges traditional two-storey living, with three bedrooms located on the ground floor and a grand open plan kitchen, dining and living area and master suite located on the first floor. This clever design flip, known as reverse or upside-down living, is becoming increasingly popular in Australia. It allows homeowners to maximise any views their property might have, as shown by the Alto which boasts a stunning vista out over the nearby coastline. Other benefits of this type of design include more natural light and airflow in the kitchen, dining and living areas and more privacy throughout the entire home. The home's Hamptons inspired Yale façade also encapsulates its coastal surroundings, rendered on the ground floor but featuring timber cladding on the first floor. This is further enhanced by a balcony at the front and rear of the first story ensuring you can enjoy the views no matter where you are in the home. In addition to three bedrooms, the ground floor includes a generous study, which is a space that has recently become more important than ever; a leisure room that opens to the outdoors, and a bathroom, making it a very flexible space. However, the 'wow' factor begins when you make your way up the large semi-cantilevered staircase to the first floor that features an internally pitched roof with a vaulted ceiling. This adds volume to the space and makes it feel open and inviting.

The opulent kitchen – complete with a large island bench and a butler's pantry – is white and bright, complementing the home's location. It also has access to the front balcony, providing ease of transition when entertaining. While the large family and dining area overflows onto the balcony at the rear. The master suite also has direct access to the front balcony and stunning views, giving it a luxury hotel like feel. Its ensuite, which flows from the walk-in robe, features timber accents to extend the coastal vibe into this space and black tapware for a modern touch. "These are just some of the thoughtful design features that really set this spectacular home apart," Metricon's Gippsland Manager, Jeff Telford said. "The Alto is truly perfect for those who like to entertain, families with older children or even a holiday home, and shows that people can access reverse living at an affordable price." The Alto is now open to the public, to experience it firsthand. "We are very happy to have the doors of all our display homes across Gippsland open to the public again – and just in time to unveil our new Alto display in Grantville," Telford said. "We are adhering to rigorous social distancing and hygiene measures in all our display homes, with the health and wellbeing of our staff and customers front of mind. We appreciate your help in adhering to social distancing guidelines when visiting," he concluded. Those who would prefer to explore the home privately can. Simply call 1300 638 742 to book a one-on-one appointment with Metricon's local New Home Advisor, Melanie Playdon.

# Light up your candles, not your home

Candle's, incense and oil burners have become a staple in Australian homes and they are often used for social, cultural and religious practices. With increased time spent indoors during the cooler months, CFA is reminding residents to use these products safely. CFA Deputy Chief Officer Trevor Owen said there were many instances where these small ambient flames had caused big fires and even bigger headaches for firefighters. "Residents need to keep in mind that although candles and oil burners can be a pleasant addition to the home, leaving them unattended could be disastrous," he said. Mr Owen said there were a number of ways residents could safely use these products that would ensure the safety of their homes and more importantly, their lives and loved ones.

"It's important to only use candles, incense and oil burners on a stable, non-combustible surface but to also keep curtains and other items away from open flames at all times," he said. "Ensure you always extinguish candles, incense, oil burners and cigarettes before leaving home or going to sleep. "Children and animals should be supervised at all times near open flames and keep a safe distance, also make sure that lighters and matches are kept out of their reach. "When smoking use heavy ashtrays with high sides to prevent them tipping over and always properly extinguish cigarettes. "We know that residents enjoy the ambience that candles incense and oil burners add to their homes, but with these small safety tips you can ensure you don't light up your home."



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*Colour my world*

Renée Clapson captured this flash of brilliance across Cape Woolamai on a cold and wintry weekend.

## Winner, winner, salmon dinner

With the easing of Coronavirus restrictions from June 22, it was possible for the Rhyll-Phillip Island Angling Club (RPIAC) to hold the annual Surf Fishing Competition on Saturday, July 4. The rules for the RPIAC members' competition were relatively straight forward.

The key points were: (1) follow the State Government of Victoria's Coronavirus restriction guidelines, (2) follow the General RPIAC Competition Rules and Regulations, (3) catch an Australian salmon in the surf, which is greater than, or equal to 30 cm in length, and (4) present your biggest salmon to the weigh-in master, between 3.30pm and 4.30pm, for official weigh-in.

At the conclusion of weigh-in the title "2020 RPIAC Surf Fishing Champion" would be announced.

Anglers, enthusiastic to assert their know-how, prepared and refined strategies to catch a beast that would make them worthy of the winter fishing title.

Consistent with previous competitions, the week's weather forecast threatened rain and strong winds.

Of course, optimists looked at the possibility of clouds and saw a silver lining. After all, fishing folklore reminds us of the connection between massive salmon, cloud cover and triumphant anglers.

On the eve of a full moon and a high tide peaking around 11am, the stage was set for an awesome competition. At 9am the weather station at Rhyll had reported 16 mm of rain in the last 24 hours.

There was an abundance of clouds and light drizzle covering Phillip Island's southern surf beaches.

A gentle breeze from the north-west assisted surfcasting, whilst a south-westerly swell wriggled baits to tempt the salmon.

The drizzle paused to reveal a rainbow and small patches of blue sky, providing optimal conditions for the salmon to strike.

Alas, the reality of the 2020 Surf Fishing Competition was far from a fairy tale for the RPIAC anglers.



Winner of the 2020 RPIAC Surf Fishing competition, Albert Abram, with his incredible salmon.

The angling majority merely looked from their windows at daylight and decided "nope", opting for other activities.

Thus, the odds for success dramatically improved for those adopting a wet-weather fishing plan, with only eyeballs and hands exposed to the environment.

Norm Trickey, the weigh-in master, had low expectations for weigh-in after reports of small salmon and seaweed slurries in the surf.

At the conclusion of weigh-in only one salmon had been presented, albeit a fine specimen, weighing 320 grams. In what can only be described as a "Bradbury" competition, the 2020 RPIAC Surf Fishing Champion title was presented by the club president, Albert Abram, to himself.

When the laughter of the small gathering ceased, Albert thanked everyone for their participation and continued support.

The Rhyll-Phillip Island Angling Club continues to monitor the Coronavirus restrictions and remains hopeful that angling competitions, for the 2020/2021 season, will commence in spring – stay tuned!

For further information about the club, events, competitions and rules, please visit the website: [www.rpiac.com](http://www.rpiac.com).

Thursday, July 2 – Men's and Ladies Stableford: Winner was Janice Baker H/c (40) with 42 points from Ian Bridge H/c (14) with 39 points.

9 Hole competition winner was Harold Jackson with 22 points.

Saturday, July 4 – Men's 9 Holes Stableford: Winner was Craig O'Neill H/c (11) with 21 points on a countback from Matt Brown H/c (12) also with 21 points.

Ladies competition – Ladies

9 Holes Stableford: Winner was Vicki Roff Smith H/c (22) with 18 points on a countback from Ada Anglin H/c (16) also with 18 points.

Men's and Ladies – 9 Holes Stableford: 9 Hole winner was Brian Carvell H/c (30) with 22 points from John Campbell H/c (31) with 18 points.

Next Week's Men's Event – Stableford – weather dependant.



Junior footy coaches from left Luke Marshall (U10 coach) Luke Davies (U12 assistant coach) and Ben Wragg (U12 coach) are pictured at last Thursday night's training session, with junior players Brydon Marshall and Archie Ross.

## Gearing up for a game

The Bulldogs are back on the oval. Under 16 and 18 footballers will play a shortened season this

year due to COVID-19 and a training timetable for all junior football teams is now confirmed.



Phillip Island U16 footballers enjoy a training session last Thursday night. The team is still waiting on advice on when the WGFNL will get underway.



Callum Niven, Will Hill, Beau Davies and Cooper Walton, and their teammates from the U14 red squad, are pictured at training last week.

## Phillip Island golf

Tuesday, June 30 – Men's Stableford: Winner was Stephen Earl H/c (14) with 41 points from Stuart Carson H/c (12) with 39 points.

9 Hole competition winner was Clive Hill with 23 points.

Wednesday, July 1 – Ladies 4

Person Ambrose: Winners were Faye Morris, Karen Green, Charlene Duthie and Helen Pirouet with 57.375 nett and runners up were Wendy Hamilton, Norma

Corr, Pam May and Taylah Robinson with 59 nett.