



PHILLIP ISLAND & SAN REMO

ADVERTISER

YOUR COMMUNITY VOICE!

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\$2.00 Incl. GST



Kids clean up

Year 2 students Myles Wilson and Sidney Hallas helped clean up the Newhaven College grounds, as part of this year's Clean Up Australia Day campaign. The annual event sees hundreds of thousands of volunteers across the country picking up rubbish, and young Myles and Sidney were keen to do their part.

State Government commits to erosion funding

SILVERLEAVES

Silverleaves residents are celebrating after winning their battle for emergency works from the State Government, in the war against coastal erosion.

MP for Bass Jordan Crugnale on Friday posted a video together with Environment Minister Steve Dimopoulos announcing the government had approved funding for erosion work at Silverleaves, as well as Inverloch and Tooradin.

"Silverleaves will be first cab off the rank," Minister Dimo-

poulos said, with Jordan then detailing emergency dune and asset protection works would "start straight away" and be completed by Easter tides.

Jordan said the geotextile sandbag wall – which residents have been lobbying for – is expected to be finished by the end of August.

"We are making sure our coastal areas are supported, safe and accessible for all locals and everybody in fact," the Minister said.

Jordan did not provide further details, although previously

had indicated the sandbag wall would cost up to \$500,000.

Resident Steve Lapin welcomed the funding news.

"We are jumping for joy," Steve said.

"Yesterday we had no funding and potentially no protection for Easter, which will see king tides of more than three metres, which would be devastating with a strong northerly.

"So this is a huge step to have surety for Easter and by August the sandbags."

Steve said he would rely on the experts to determine the best

temporary works for Easter, but it would likely be rock bags.

Resident Natalie Gray was more muted in her support.

"It is disappointing the works have been delayed so additional costly intervention is necessary," Natalie said.

"Our homes are uncertain until the adaptation process is complete. The uncertainty means that people remain very cautious about the future of Silverleaves as a place to live and invest."

Natalie acknowledged Jordan's "efforts as being incredibly difficult".

"I also acknowledge the time of all State and Federal politicians and candidates, as well as the commitment by Bass Coast Shire."

Cowes East Foreshore Preventative Action Group (CEFPAG) chair Ken Hailey said he was "absolutely delighted" with the funding.

"It's well overdue and up to now has caused a lot of unnecessary heartache for Woodlands Avenue residents," Ken said.

"We are now assuming the temporary measures will be in

Continued page 10

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19 29	17 23	15 28	18 30	21 29	14 21	14 18

Woolamai staircase closed temporarily

BEACH SAFETY

Due to sand erosion, the Woolamai Beach stairway will be closed until March 21, contingent on sand returning, a Phillip Island Nature Park (PINP) spokesperson has said. The ramp, to the left as you travel down the Woolamai beach walkway, as well as all other public access points will be open as normal.

The spokesperson said the closure and works on the steps will not affect Woolamai Beach Surf Life-saving Club (WBSLSC) operations.

PINP previously completed works to ensure beach access, and to support WBSLSC patrol services over the summer period following sand erosion late last year. However further erosion has since occurred and rendered the steps unsafe for public use.

Minor works are planned over the coming weeks, and the stairway is expected to reopen by March 21 ahead of the school holidays and Easter period.

Woolamai Beach is currently patrolled on weekends, from 1pm-5pm on Saturdays and 10am-4pm Sundays, through until April 21.



Due to sand erosion, the Woolamai Beach stairway will be closed and is expected to reopen by March 21 ahead of the school holidays and Easter period.

POLICE BRIEFS

Nobbies false alarm

Rescue and emergency services, including Police airwing were called to The Nobbies on Sunday, March 9 after a woman was believed to have gone missing in the area.

The woman had reportedly ignored instructions from staff at The Nobbies not to walk along a track in the area and then disappeared from sight.

However, it was later reported the woman made her own way back to the carpark.

Fake registration

A grey Audi was impounded in San Remo earlier this month for displaying fake registration plates. The car was also unregistered.

The 38-year-old male driver from Endeavour Hills also had a disqualified licence, and a warrant out for his arrest.

The man will appear in Ringwood and Korumburra Magistrates courts in the next few months.

The vehicle was also impounded for 30 days at a cost of \$1445.

Disqualified

A 37-year-old woman from Cape Woolamai was arrested for driving without a licence in Smiths Beach on March 5 at 12.45am.

Police alleged she was driving with a disqualified licence.

The car was impounded for 30 days at a cost of \$1275.

The driver will appear in the Korumburra Magistrates court later this year.

AusNet takes to the skies

ELECTRICITY

AusNet helicopters will be undertaking aerial inspections across Phillip Island on March 18 and 19.

There will also be aerial inspections along the highway from San Remo to Wonthaggi. An AusNet spokesperson said the company carries out inspections throughout the year to help identify, monitor and repair wear and tear on powerlines and poles.

"These routine aerial inspections help to support a reliable and safe electricity supply for communities across our network," they said.



AusNet helicopters will be undertaking aerial inspections across Phillip Island on March 18 and 19, in the areas illustrated by this map.

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A series of streets in Cowes East have been earmarked for a speed reduction to 40km/h, with one area dropping to 10km/hr.

Do you support Cowes east speed reduction proposal?

ROADS

A proposal to change speed limits in Cowes east has divided the community, receiving hundreds of online comments.

Last month Bass Coast Shire released proposed speed limit changes on the Engage Bass Coast website, including changes to Back Beach Road San Remo and the Cowes East roads.

In Cowes east, sections of Settlement Road, Church Street, Chapel Street and The Esplanade are earmarked for a reduced speed limit of 40km, as are roads running between these streets.

Several sections are earmarked for a 20km/h speed limit, including at the Cowes Recreation Reserve, Transit Centre, the Bass Avenue and Warley Avenue car parks and the section of Thompson Avenue between Chapel Street and The Esplanade.

The Esplanade between Bass and Warley avenues is designated a 10km/h shared zone.

Feedback on the speed zones was extended until March 24 following community criticism.

Opposition to the proposal on social media was strident.

Glenn asked "at what stage do they stop dropping the speed limit?"

"It will make driving around Cowes a nightmare."

Fiona concluded she'd be "better off walking if we go

any slower" and Matt suggested it would be a revenue raising project through speed cameras.

Judith commented the areas proposed for a reduction were "not necessarily inhabited with large quantities of wildlife so why the reduction?"

Many commented the speed reduction proposal was part of a broader car parking problem.

Angela said the speed reductions were an "excuse to reduce the parking spaces to coincide with the ridiculous" proposed one way traffic and removal of parking on Thompson Avenue.

Megan said while the speed limits encouraged walking, she said a better option would be to "start providing the right amount of car parking spaces so we don't continuously make the island a difficult place to move around for those who live here, especially the older generations".

Phil said the proposal was a "joke" and instead the shire should put a roundabout at Dunsmore Road so "people can get across and stop the congestion".

Debby said the money should instead be spent on cleaning the main street as she was "shocked to see how dirty Thompson Avenue was".

Support

While opposition was strident, there was also support.

Bruce supported the

speed reductions, saying in higher pedestrian areas the speed limit must be 30kph maximum.

Karen agreed saying Coghlan and Settlement roads were "almost becoming a freeway" and Doreen saying some drivers used the area as a "racetrack".

"That's the world recognised not dangerous speed," Bruce said.

Lewis was also a supporter, advocating for a speed reduction further along Settlement Road, past Mitre 10.

"It's a good move, drop the limit and change the road culture," added Jeff.

Mikhaela said the community needed "to stop catering to cars so much".

"Improve the bike lanes and walking trails and get rid of the cars. For an environmental area, we're not very environmental," she said.

Alice said the slower speeds added a tiny portion to travel times.

"I'm not sure what the reasoning for the speed reduction is either, but mathematically it only adds 24 seconds to the trip over this 800m stretch, so I think we'll all survive," she added.

Although Andrew calculated 24 seconds four times a day would add up to 19 days over a person's 47-year average working life.

Details: engage.basscoast.vic.gov.au/speed-reviews-and-parking-improvements



Critical maintenance work on the water and sewerage pipes on the underside of the Phillip Island bridge has now been completed.

Pipeline upgrades on bridge complete

INFRASTRUCTURE

Critical maintenance work on the water and sewerage pipes on underside of the Phillip Island bridge have been completed.

The work began in November 2024, and this week, the State Government and Westernport Water announced the \$5.9 million project was complete.

Westernport Water said the major upgrade would provide improved water services for Phillip Island and San Remo.

Last year, they said the brackets connecting the pipelines to the bridge and fittings were deteriorating and in need of repair.

"Refurbishing and replacing these items now will extend the life of the pipeline for another thirty years," Westernport Water Managing Director, Dona Tantirimudalige said at the time.

The works included the use of suspended scaffolding under the bridge so workers could safely access the pipes while minimising impacts to traffic and the community.

Significant stakeholder consultation, planning and approval took place to minimise impacts to water customers, visitors, the economy and the local environment, Westernport Water said.

The underbridge pipelines are a critical piece of water infrastructure, which supply

drinking water to Phillip Island, and transport wastewater from San Remo to the Cowes Wastewater Treatment Plant.

"We would like to thank the local community for their support throughout this project, which has secured reliable water and wastewater services into the future," Ms Tantirimudalige said.

The first drinking water pipe was installed in 1969 during construction of the bridge.

In the early 1990s, Westernport Water added a second, smaller water pipeline as well as a sewer pipe to transport sewerage from San Remo to the wastewater treatment plant on Phillip Island.

The latest upgrade will extend the lifespan of the pipelines.

"As communities grow, this vital upgrade will make sure that water and wastewater service can meet growing demand, improving the quality of life for residents and businesses," Minister for Water Gayle Tierney said.

"This project was one of Westernport Water's most complex projects to date, and its success is a testament to the skills and expertise of everyone involved."

Member for Bass, Jordan Crugnale also praised the upgrade, saying it would improve the "health and quality of life on Phillip Island."

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Scrutiny on political donations

ELECTION

Political donations look set to be a hot topic in the lead up to this year's federal election.

And local independent candidate Deb Leonard has been pulled into the fight. In Senate Estimates earlier this month, Liberal Senator Jane Hume named four independent candidates, including Deb Leonard, who she said had failed to register on the Australian Electoral Commissions (AEC) transparency register, in breach of the Electoral Act.

Senator Hume said under the act, any candidate not on the register had to "immediately cease accepting donations or incurring electoral expenditure until they've been added to the

transparency register".

Ms Leonard described the accusations levelled against the four independent candidates as "mud slinging".

However the AEC confirmed all four issues were being looked into. The AEC told the Advertiser it was standard practice not to comment when enquiries were "being made into matters of compliance", but it did confirm they were following up on the matters discussed at the Senate Estimates.

"If and when an application for registration has been processed and considered, the information will be available on the AEC's transparency register," an AEC spokesperson said. They also confirmed the



Independent Deb Leonard said she is in contact with the AEC and had applied for the transparency register, after she was one of four independent candidates named by Liberal Senator Jane Hume in Senate Estimates.

process of applications and approvals for the transparency register continued throughout the election period.

The AEC website states a "person or entity that

meets the definition of an associated entity or significant third party must register with the AEC before the end of 90 days after becoming required to be registered".

Just when this 90-day period begins is not clear.

"Hypocritical"

Deb Leonard said she was in contact with the AEC and had applied for registration for Monash Independent Pty Ltd (established December 11, 2024).

She described the accusations by Senator Hume of a lack of transparency as "hypocritical".

"I am disclosing all my donations on my website as they come in.

"The Liberal party is not disclosing anything until after the election and even then, only those over the \$16,900 threshold.

"They are trying to throw mud, but they are the ones who are not transparent."

Ms Leonard said she was continuing to work with the AEC and stressed "no person has been disadvantaged by the delay" in her being added to the transparency register.

Current member for Monash Russell Broadbent, who is also contesting the seat as an independent, told The Advertiser he was not accepting any donations, and would be self-funding his campaign. The date of the federal election has yet to be confirmed.

You can view the list of donors to Deb Leonard's campaign at www.debleonard4monash.com.au/donate

To date, there are over 400 separate donations, totalling over \$700,000.

Business Awards are back

BUSINESS

Entries are now open for the 2025 Bass Coast Business Awards.

This annual event now in its 18th year celebrates the exceptional achievements of businesses within the Bass Coast community and showcases the diverse talents and contributions of local businesses.

The awards are divided into two categories: Judged and People's Choice awards.

The judged categories recognise businesses that excel in various aspects, including innovation, customer service, sustainability, and community involvement. A panel of judges will evaluate the entries and select winners based on predetermined criteria. The People's Choice Awards allow the community to vote for their favourite businesses. Last year's Bass Coast Business Awards attracted entries from 54 businesses across diverse industries, from tourism and hospitality to construction and professional services.

Ocean Sounds took home Business of the Year,



Wildlife Coast Cruises were inducted into the Hall of Fame at the 2024 Business Awards. Entries are now open for the 2025 awards.

and two Hall of Fame winners, Wildlife Coast Cruises and TerraLab were recognised for their long-term enthusiasm in our business community.

Bass Coast Mayor, Cr Rochelle Halstead encourages businesses to get involved in this year's awards.

"The Bass Coast Business Awards celebrate the

dedication and innovation of our local businesses. Entering is not just about recognition – it's a chance to reflect, grow, and set new benchmarks for success in your industry.

"There are real economic and promotional benefits for businesses that take part, and we want to see our local businesses thrive. The Awards are

the business community's highlight of the year, and I look forward to celebrating the outstanding talent and success across Bass Coast."

Finalists will be announced in July and the Gala dinner will be held in August.

Ready to apply? Visit basscoast.vic.gov.au/businessawards

Feedback wanted on San Remo plan

COUNCIL

Bass Coast Shire Council is calling for feedback on a draft San Remo Structure Plan, a document designed to guide the town's growth and development over the next 20 years.

The council said planning for San Remo's future was essential, and the structure plan was key to ensuring growth across the shire is properly managed.

"San Remo's population is expected to increase, with a significant portion being older residents," council stated.

"To support this change, the Draft Structure Plan outlines how housing, infrastructure, and services will evolve while protecting the coastal character and environment. It also considers transport, economic growth, and the town's role as a key District Town in the region."

A range of community engagement activities will be held, including:

- Community session: Wednesday March 26 from 6pm – 7.30pm (location tba)
- Pop-up session: Wednes-

day April 2 from 2pm – 6pm, Marine Parade, San Remo (outside IGA)

Feedback is also open online until April 28 at engage.basscoast.vic.gov.au/sanremoplan

This is the final stage of community consultation, and the council is seeking feedback from residents, businesses, and community groups to help shape the final Structure Plan.

"San Remo is such a wonderful place to live, and I want future generations to enjoy it as we do today," Bass Coast Mayor Cr Rochelle Halstead said.

"This plan will guide how our town grows while preserving what makes it special. I encourage everyone to share their thoughts to help shape its future."

The council's Strategic Planning Team is available for one-on-one discussions to help answer your questions and guide you through the Structure Plan.

To arrange a meeting, please contact Council's Strategic Planning Team at 1300 BCOAST (226 278) or (03) 5671 2211, or email strategicplanningadmin@basscoast.vic.gov.au.

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Tackling drownings in Bass Coast

BEACH SAFETY

A new framework developed specifically for Mornington Peninsula and Bass Coast recommends education strategies and improved signage at high-risk locations, to prevent drownings in the area.

Life Saving Victoria described it as a “Victoria-first initiative to address alarmingly high drowning rates on the Mornington Peninsula and Bass Coast”.

The Water Safety Framework was developed in collaboration with local councils, lifesaving clubs, sports clubs, multicultural groups, passionate locals and tourism operators, including Mornington Peninsula Shire, Bass Coast Shire, Cardinia Shire, City of Greater Dandenong, City of Casey and Belgrave Leisure, which operates pools in Melbourne’s southeast.

LSV said the combined footprint of the five councils was intentionally sought to capture many of the residential postcodes of those who drown on the Mornington Peninsula and Bass Coast.

A total of 100 fatal drownings occurred in the region over the past decade, nearly a quarter (21 per cent) of all incidents across Victoria.

Half of all drownings (51 per cent) involved people who lived in the combined cross-council region. Of those who drowned, nearly half (45 per cent) were from a culturally or linguistically diverse community.

Most common activities that led to drowning incidents were swimming, paddling, wading and fishing.

LSV Manager – Research and Evaluation Dr Hannah Calverley said the framework was an important tool to help the local community reduce drowning.

“This brings everyone



A profile of drowning statistics in Bass Coast between 2014 and 2024, with drownings at five times the Victoria LGA average.

in the community to the table so we can tackle the issue of drownings on the Mornington Peninsula and Bass Coast,” Dr. Calverley said.

Bass Coast

According to the framework, there were 32 fatal drownings in Bass Coast Shire between 2014/15 and 2023/24.

That is five times the Victorian LGA average, with a 96 per cent chance a fatal drowning will occur in Bass Coast in any year.

The majority of drownings were visitors, with only five Bass Coast residents drowning in the 10-year period (and not all of them within the shire).

Over the decade, the report said there were also 21 non-fatal drownings attended by paramedics.

According to the risk factor assessment, people were more likely to drown in Bass Coast in summer (66 per cent) and on a weekday (69 per cent).

Of the fatal drownings in the shire, 59 per cent were from a culturally or linguistically diverse background. While local residents accounted for 16 per cent of drownings, residents of Casey (25 per cent) and Cardinia were the most heavily represented.

The report also noted that the non-fatal drowning statistics didn’t reflect self-rescues, or bystander rescues such as surfers coming to the aid of people in trouble in the water.

In January 2024, four people lost their lives at Forrest Caves on Phillip Island, the worst incidence of mass drowning in the state in nearly two decades.

In findings handed down late last year, Coroner Sarah Gebert identified a particular risk of coastline drownings for those from multicultural communities and CALD (culturally and linguistically diverse) backgrounds.

Recommendations

The Water Safety Framework recommends “opportunities for drowning prevention” in the short term (one year), medium (one to four years) and long term (five plus).

Short term strategies to promote beach and water safety include:

- Community and school education programs
- Connecting and training tourism providers to educate visitors
- Engaging with young volunteers and sports participants, to act as ambassadors or champions
- Use forums like the Multicultural Engagement Network to promote messages and warnings to CALD groups
- Connect lifesaving groups with CALD groups
- Lifesavers to provide on-site beach safety education at beaches and in townships away from patrolled locations

Medium term strategies include:

- Review beach safety signage at high-risk locations for compliance with national standards and add QR codes linked to Beachsafe App with in language information
- Develop local education programs
- Social media campaign targeting high-risk cohorts
- Install barriers at key high-risk activity areas (eg: pier jumping, rock fishing)
- Install public rescue equipment at high-risk drowning locations with education on usage
- Consider alternative lifesaving patrol models to cover more beaches
- Seek funding for more paid lifeguard services in peak periods, providing outposts from main club locations
- Convene local water safety planning committee, and develop plans for each area



In January 2024, four family members died at the unpatrolled Forrest Caves beach, the worst incidence of mass drowning in the state in nearly two decades. A report by the coroner identified a particular risk for those from multicultural communities and CALD backgrounds.

- Install mobile phone antenna boosters and emergency markers in high-risk regions

Long term strategies:

- Funding grants to local groups to develop water safety initiatives
- Develop a drowning data collection tool
- Partner with aquatic equipment suppliers to provide safety information
- Implement geofencing to push notifications to mobile phones about high-risk drowning locations
- Partner with VicEmergency App to share warnings about dangerous surf conditions
- Legislation to deny access and prosecute trespassers at key drowning blackspot locations
- Restrict parking at high-risk locations (eg: Punchbowl)
- Increase patrolled waterway locations with supporting infrastructure
- Install ladders and infrastructure for safe water exits at high-risk locations
- Engage accredited providers to lead in-water experiences for children and caregivers
- Implement widespread public rescue equipment with community education

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“Don’t just vote, act”: Terence Steele

ELECTION

While Terence Steele, the Greens candidate for Monash, admits there is little chance of winning the seat, he sees the upcoming election as a fight for climate action.

“It’s pretty clear, isn’t it? It’s ultimately about climate. A lot of people in the electorate don’t see it that way, but in the end, I think what will define this period of time is what we do or don’t do about climate action,” Mr Steele said.

Terence Steele is a Kardella South resident and divides his time between his 10-acre property near Leongatha and a small house in Melbourne. Now semi-retired and working at a recycling company, his teaching career spanned primary, secondary and tertiary institutions. His most recent teaching position was at Mary MacKillop College in Leongatha, where he finished shortly after the pandemic.

Announced as the Greens candidate last month, Mr Steele is a relative newcomer whose involvement in politics for most of his life never extended beyond making democracy sausages at voting stations.

While cooking sausages for people voting in a by-election in Melbourne, Mr Steele said it was a Greens volunteer from Phillip Island who swayed him to join the party.

“This guy was fairly old, and he’d been coming up from Phillip Island to the city every day for a fortnight. I asked him ‘why do you do that?’ and he said, ‘I want to leave a better world for my grandchildren’. That really struck me because I had just had grandchildren myself,” Mr Steele said.

“So a few weeks later, I eventually joined the Greens. Thanks to a bloke from Phillip Island.”

Priorities

“There’s no doubt the key issue people bring up is always the cost of living: rent, mortgage, food,” Mr Steele said.

“I was talking to a man who runs a local fish shop ... his power bill in a bit over 12 months went from \$4000 a month to \$7000 a month.”

But while high-inflation, interest rate hikes, essential goods and energy prices compound the cost-of-living pressures felt by millions of Australians, Mr Steele said “the issue is more or less the structure of our economy that’s causing the cost of living. And the big parties just tinker at the edges”.

“One of the countries that hasn’t felt the same cost-of-living pressures is Switzerland – they never sold their electricity networks, they’re still government owned.”

And while Mr Steele acknowledged “the horse has probably bolted on that one”, the Greens candidate said he would push for major tax reform.

“The Greens are going to get the bigger companies ... to pay their share of tax. Back when Menzies was Prime Minister, we used to have progressive taxation but that’s gradually been wound back. Over a third of companies don’t pay tax,” Mr Steele said.

“And when you hear about ‘the bank of mum and dad’, in reality what that’s talking about is Australia becoming a land of landed gentry, where there are people who own land and who are fine, but if you don’t own a house, or land, or several houses, you’re going to be poor for the rest of your life.”

Mr Steele said the seeming lack of available funding for local infrastructure projects such as the Phillip Island sports hub “comes down to the fact the tax pool is diminished”.

Energy

Mr Steele said under his block of land in Kardella South is “seven layers of the best coal in Australia”.

“It’s very rich, black coal, and if it rains when we have a very wet winter, the water table on my land rises up above the top of the ground and there’s

water lying everywhere. I used to think it was rotting vegetation, but eventually I worked out it’s the hydrocarbons leaching up out of the ground.”

The Greens candidate strongly rejected claims made by other Monash candidates that there was an available abundance of coal in the area, and said tapping into the supply would require fracking – a process where water, sand and chemicals are injected at high pressure into underground coal seams to release the natural gas trapped inside.

“Victoria’s lived on gas since the 60s, oil and gas from Bass Strait. When those wells started, they used to pump out 90 per cent hydrocarbons and 10 per cent water. The wells that are still running are pumping out 90 per cent water and 10 per cent hydrocarbons.”

“I think (Dutton’s nuclear energy plan) is a delaying tactic. If (Dutton’s) elected, it’s quite clear there’ll be a continued reliance on gas and coal. The only gas left in Gippsland is gas that can be fracked out of coal seams.”

The race heats up

As reported in the Pakenham Gazette recently, incumbent candidate and Liberal party defector Russel Broadbent has said he will call for his preferences to flow to Liberal Party candidate Mary Aldred – who defeated Mr Broadbent in the 2023 pre-selection vote 161 to 16.

The move quashes speculation the two conservative candidates would “cancel out” each other.

While Mr Steele said there was no determination yet as to who the Greens would nominate as their designated preferences, he acknowledged the media release which accompanied the announcement of his standing was favourable to independent Deb Leonard.

“I knew when I put my hand up for the Greens we had very little chance of winning,” Mr Steele said.



Terence Steele, the Greens candidate for the federal seat of Monash, says the upcoming election is a fight for climate action. “I think what will define this period of time is what we do or don’t do about climate action,” Mr Steele said.

Last election the Greens secured 9.86 per cent of the vote.

“But my aim was in the long haul to spend my time living in the country, and

my retirement time building up a network of people taking action on climate change.

“If I wanted to give you a quotable quote, I’d say:

‘don’t just vote, act.’ You don’t have to vote green, but you have to act green. You have to realise that we are 30 seconds to midnight.”



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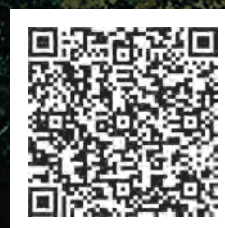


Fatigue is a contributing factor in 16-20% of all road crashes in Victoria.
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Driving tired? Wake up to yourself.

TAC

VICTORIA
State
Government



Batteries draw flak

ENERGY

The placement of the new neighbourhood batteries has attracted the ire of some residents.

On social media, a post questioning why a battery at McKenzie View Park in Cowes was situated so close to a playground, opened a storm of responses.

Some called for the community to come together and get it moved, while others questioned if the battery was safe.

In March last year, it was announced Phillip Island would receive seven neighbourhood batteries, with Victorian Energy Minister Lily D'Ambrosio visiting Cowes to confirm the government was contributing \$2.1 million to the project.

The location of the seven batteries was announced in early December 2024.

Over the past 12 months, Mondo, a subsidiary of AusNet and the company responsible for the installation, have run ads, public meetings and a number of online sessions, to keep the community updated on the project.

As part of the community consultation to determine the location of the batteries, a Mondo spokesperson previously told the Advertiser the company door knocked all surrounding neighbours twice and left letters if they weren't in attendance.

Despite this, on social media people complained they didn't know what the batteries were for, and that there had been "no prior consultation".

"A source of information would be appreciated," said one resident.

Others were critical of where the battery was being placed in the Katherine Circuit park.

A spokesperson from AusNet explained how the siting of the batteries was determined on the seven selected sites.



Residents have queried why a new neighbourhood battery in Cowes is being placed so close to a playground; however AusNet said a key factor in choosing the site was "to optimise public safety".

"A key factor in choosing the final location was the regulatory and network guidance for installation, making sure to optimise public safety," the spokesperson said.

"From a safety and performance perspective it is preferable to be as close as possible to the nearest transformer or low voltage circuit, to limit interference with other services, vegetation or future civil works.

"The aim is to give the battery the strongest possible connection to the network so it can perform at optimal level.

"In addition to this it gives the greatest support to daytime charging, absorbing solar generation, discharging at night to support high evening demand."

The spokesperson said a number of factors were considered when determining exactly

where the batteries were sited.

These included proximity to neighbours, impact on public amenity, cultural heritage, potential damage to biodiversity and ecological impacts, as well as suitable flat (or near flat) land "that is most appropriate for use".

They also said the CFA's State Safety team was consulted to "ensure location of batteries is consistent with public safety".

Possible existing soil contamination, consideration of the Marine and Coastal Act or flooding and the proximity to a transformer ("the closer to the transformer the better") were also factors in the decision.

Project

The neighbourhood battery project has been a collaboration between Mondo, Bass Coast

Shire Council, Totally Renewable Phillip Island and the Victorian State Government.

Mondo said the seven sites were predominantly selected based on areas of the island that have an existing high uptake of rooftop solar, "or where there was a possibility of increased energy network activity because of electrification".

The batteries will store the energy until it is needed in the evening or morning when demand is high and renewable energy is limited, as well as summer peak demands, but won't prevent outages or provide back-up power during an outage.

In what is believed to be a first, a percentage of any revenue made from the batteries will be donated back to the community for further renewable projects.

The seven neighbourhood battery sites are:

1. Berninnet – Thompson Avenue (205 kWh) – which has the potential to become an emergency centre to charge phones when the power is down
2. Corner Kembla Road and Pasadena Drive, reserve, (410 kWh)
3. Corner Seagrass Avenue and Everton Drive, reserve, (205 kWh)
4. Goodwood Drive and Elvington Avenue, reserve, (410 kWh)
5. Hallway Drive, Wimbledon Heights, reserve, (205 kWh)
6. Council depot – Settlement Road (205 kWh)
7. Katherine Circuit, park, (205 kWh)

Installation is expected to be completed by August.

Cat disease killing bandicoots

WILDLIFE

Autopsies on dead Phillip Island Eastern barred bandicoots has found 20 per cent were killed from a disease found in cats.

The revelation is detailed in the Nature Park's latest annual Threatened Species report, which states that while feral cats aren't eating the threatened bandicoots, the cat disease *Toxoplasma gondii* could be having a "significant impact" on the island's bandicoot population.

The report says bandicoots are "highly likely to die within two weeks of exposure to the disease, before any antibodies are formed".

Nature Parks is intensifying measures to control feral cats, "which continue to pose a significant threat to native wildlife", which follows the 24/7 cat curfew across Phillip Island, introduced in mid-2023.

Conservation dogs, Marbee and Milly, have been trained to detect evidence of feral cats in the landscape, while 30 x 4G cat

monitoring cameras have been installed.

Since being released on Churchill Island, last year's research found bandicoot breeding there was "robust" with 61 pouch young, while researchers found the Summerland Peninsula population had 14 pouch young.

The report states the public EBB sightings portal – where the community report wild bandicoot sightings – has found the species "continue to expand through the centre of the island towards Rhyll and Cowes".

Other species

The Threatened Species report also highlights the successful 2024 reintroduction of 12 critically endangered Bush Stone Curlews with a November health check showing the birds have settled into two different zones around Oswin Roberts and Koala Conservation Reserve.

"The progress of the birds will be assessed by their survival rates, habitat use, movement patterns and reproductive success," the report states.

There has also been success with the critically endangered fairy terns at Observation Point, with Western Port listed by both UNESCO and Ramsar as a globally significant area for biodiversity conservation.

Following years of unsuccessful nesting attempts, Nature Parks officers restored habitat and controlled rabbits, which was "environmentally transformative", with 136 eggs across 69 nests recorded, along with the successful hatching of chicks (see separate story).

The 2023-24 hooded plover breeding season resulted in 12 pairs successfully raising 10 fledglings, achieving a fledging rate of 0.83 per pair, which surpasses BirdLife Australia's benchmark of 0.5 fledglings per pair and is "among the highest in Victoria".

The report states 33 per cent of plover nest failures were caused by high tides, 20 per cent were suspected raven predation and 40 per cent due to unknown causes. The number of cameras will increase from five to 10, to identify nest failure causes.



Eastern barred bandicoots sightings across Phillip Island in the past year.

Dogs, plants

Conservation dogs, Flash and Macey, trained to detect evidence of foxes, continued to ensure Phillip Island remained fox-free, with a new addition to the team, Blaze, undergoing training.

Conservation dogs, Marbee and Milly, which detect feral cats, have been used at key locations including Observation Point, Oswin Roberts Reserve and the Summerland Peninsula.

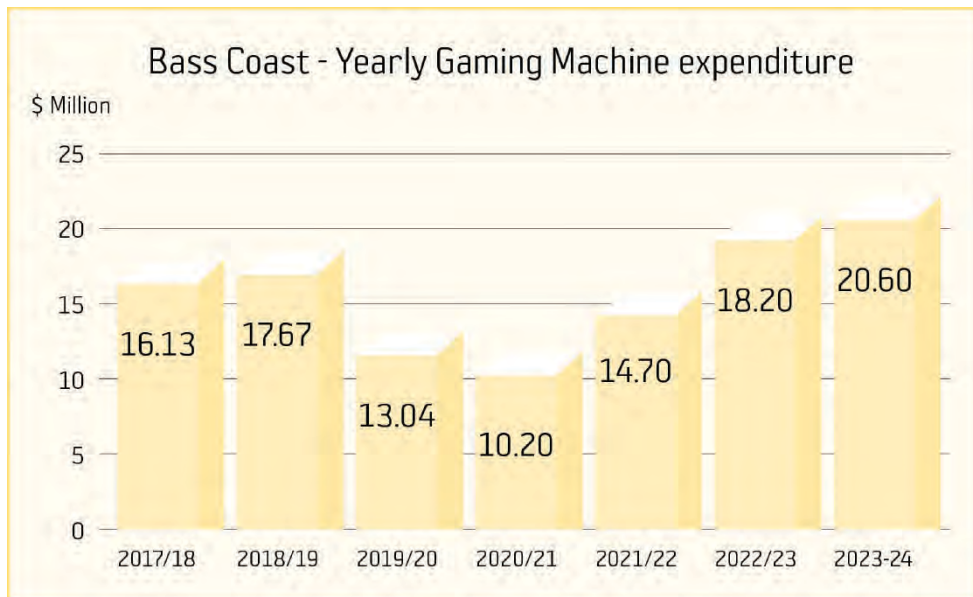
Nature Parks has also been working to save threatened plants, including the critically endangered crimson berry, which is only found in restricted coastal habitats on Phillip

Island, Wilsons Promontory, Corner Inlet and Tasmania.

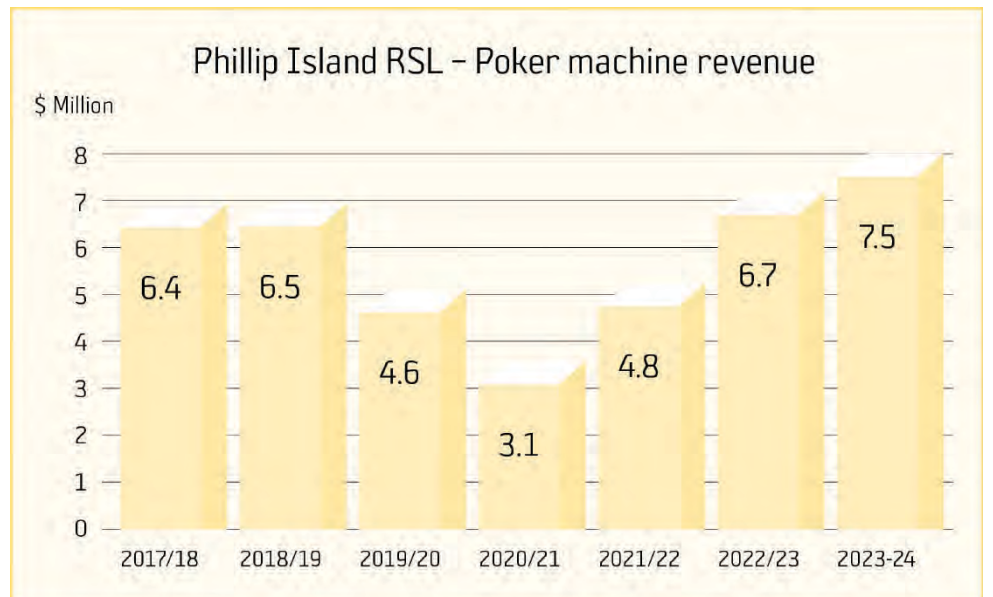
While the hot and dry conditions in February and March 2024 impacted the plants installed at Cape Woolamai and YCW-the Gap, with only a 30 per cent survival rate, a crimson berry coop at Cape Woolamai achieved a 65 per cent survival rate because of regular watering and mulching.

The rabbit exclusion zone at Surf Beach is showing signs of recovery, with promising growth of grass trigger plants.

Details: www.penguins.org.au/assets/conservation/regulations/Threatened-Species-Report-2024.pdf



As both the state and federal governments introduce measures to reduce gambling harm, across the shire, gambling losses continue to increase. Since the low of Covid (\$10.2 million in 2020/21) losses have doubled, with \$20.6 million lost in the last financial year.



The Phillip Island RSL has recovered from its Covid slump, with gambling losses at the venue in the last financial year (\$7.5 million) the highest in the venue's history.

Government axes gambling incentives

GAMBLING

The Federal Government will axe research and development tax incentives for gambling companies, announced as part of the Treasurer's mid-year budget update.

Earlier in 2024, the Treasurer Jim Chalmers flagged a possible crackdown on taxpayer funds going to poker machine research and development, after a report from the Australian Taxation Office showed millions of dollars flowing to gambling companies.

Harm minimisation research for poker machines will still be eligible for tax support.

The move comes as calls continue for government to crack down on online gambling, poker machines and gambling advertising.

A report by Equity Economics released in March, showed that the amount of money being lost on gambling had increased significantly, despite the cost of living crisis.

The report said Australians lose \$31.5 billion to gambling every year, pointing out that is more than the federal government spends on aged care (\$28.3 billion) or the NDIS (\$35.2 billion).

The report was commissioned by the Alliance for Gambling Reform and Wesley Mission.

Gambling experts said gambling losses often increase in times of financial stress, and are usually significantly higher in areas with low socio economic demographics. The report said gambling losses "disproportionally burden those households least able to afford them".

In November, the Victorian Government introduced a bill it said was designed to "reduce gambling harm" caused by poker machines.

Measures include reducing the spin rate of poker machines, reducing the amount of money that can be loaded into a machine at one time from \$1000 to \$100, and mandatory pre-commitment limits.

Recently the government also announced a review into the state's community benefit scheme, which provides significant tax cuts to clubs with gaming machines, providing they invest 8.33 per cent of gaming revenue back into the community.

The scheme is split into two main classes: A and B. Class A refers to "direct community benefits", and venue operators can claim 100 per cent of these items.

Class B claims are categorised as "indirect community benefits" and can include staff wages and venue operational expenses.

The scheme has come under increased scrutiny across the state in recent months, particularly for claims made in the Class B category.

Gambling opponents say the scheme can't repair the "social and economic harm" of gambling, describing it as "simply a public relations opportunity for venues" and a way to buy "social licence".

The state's gaming minister Melissa Horne acknowledged concerns about "misuse" of the scheme and triggered a review into the process.

Poker machine numbers in the state are determined by the State Government.

In 2020 Bass Coast Shire councillors voted to support the Australian Local Government Association in calling on the Federal Government to establish a Royal Commission into the gambling industry.

"Staggering" losses

Last year, over \$20 million was lost on poker machines in Bass Coast.

Phillip Island RSL reported the highest player losses of \$7.5 million, up from \$6.7 million the previous year.

Its 58 machines also recorded the highest revenue per machine of any of the five gaming venues in Bass Coast.

In December, Phillip Island RSL President Peter Paul outlined the ways the not-for-profit organisation gives back to the community, saying overall poker machines were "absolutely" a net-benefit to the community.

Local MP Jordan Crugnale said the amount of money lost in the shire was "beyond staggering".

"Whilst it is a legitimate form of gambling, there is so much harm and this has consequences not just for the person gambling but everyone around them."

She said the community benefit scheme needed an overhaul.

"Pokie venues and their operators need to do better, and personally I would love to see them gone altogether," Ms Crugnale said.

In the 2023/24 financial year, \$20 million was lost in poker machines across the shire, with an average monthly loss of \$1.7 million.

Losses peaked in January

(\$1.96 million) with the lowest loss recorded in June (\$1.55 million).

Supporters of the machines claim tourists make up a large portion of the gambling revenue, however baseline losses of close to \$1.6 million every month of the year suggests there are local residents who are regularly playing, and losing, on the poker machines.

According to research by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, Australians lose more per capita to gambling than any country in the world, losing \$25 billion a year.

Poker machines are a major source of gambling revenue, with most states allowing the machines in venues outside of dedicated gaming venues like casinos. Only WA has laws confining poker machines to casinos, and it has the lowest per capita gambling losses in the country.

A report by NSW GambleAware stated 73.3 per cent of people seeking help for problem gambling in 2020-21 identified poker machines as their primary form of gambling. Less than one per cent listed lotteries, race betting was 13.1 per cent and sports betting 7.9 per cent.

Statewide debate over speed zones

ROAD SAFETY

While Bass Coast Shire Council has been criticised for its inadequate consultation on a proposal to introduce new, reduced speed zones in Cowes east (see separate story), a new report is proposing 30 km/h speed zones on local streets across Victoria.

A draft report released by Infrastructure Victoria, an independent expert advisory body, has proposed 30 km/h per hour speed limits on local streets to improve safety and promote walking and cycling.

Studies overseas, including in London, Canada and Wales, have shown a significant reduction in pedestrian injuries or deaths, when speed limits were lowered.

Dr Lauren Pearson is a Research Fellow and Equity Lead within the Sustainable Mobility and Safety Research Group in the School of Public Health and



While council has been criticised for its consultation on a proposed change to speed limits in Cowes, including reducing Chapel Street to 40 km/h, an Infrastructure Victoria report is proposing 30 km/h speed zones on local streets across the state.

Preventive Medicine at Monash University.

She's one of the university's experts who have been involved with research examining the benefits of lower speed limits.

"Thirty km/h speed zones are one of the most cost-effective interventions we can use to enhance the safety and liveability of local streets," Dr Pearson said. "Amid a physical activity and

mental health crisis, increasing road trauma rates, and a climate emergency, the need for interventions such as these to enable people to use active mobility (walking and biking) are more important than ever.

"We have seen the effect of these speed zones in places such as Wales, Canada, Scotland, Colombia and across Europe.

"In Toronto, Canada, there was a 67 per cent reduction in serious injuries following implementation of 30 km/h speed zones. Similarly in London, fatal and serious injuries dropped by 46 per cent in areas with 30 km/h speeds, with a further eight per cent reduction in adjacent areas."

Dr Pearson said Australia was well behind the rest of the world, and there were currently only two areas in Victoria trialling the lower speed zones.

"We have a strong and growing body of evidence for the vast

benefits of these interventions, and continued calls for their implementation from not only this report from Infrastructure Victoria, but from a recent road safety parliamentary inquiry, and from the World Health Organisation as well."

The proposal for Cowes East suggests a reduction to 40 km/h for sections of Thompson Avenue, Settlement Road, Dunsmore Road, Church Street, Chapel Street and The Esplanade, along with local roads that run between these.

The proposal also includes a 10 km/h shared zone on The Esplanade between Bass and Warley avenues, and 20 km/h in car parks in the area.

Consultation on the proposed new zones has been extended to March 24.

engage.basscoast.vic.gov.au/speed-reviews-and-parking-improvements

Silverleaves residents expect “inundation and destruction”: survey

EROSION

The vast majority of Silverleaves residents don't think their area will withstand or recover from potential coastal erosion or flooding, with more planning needed, a survey has found.

Last year the State Government surveyed Silverleaves residents, following the release of a report that found sea level rise was coming faster than previously predicted, with more than 200 responses to a questionnaire in August and September.

The Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) has released the survey results, alongside announcing the 11 members of the new Silverleaves Coastal Adaptation Community Reference Group (CRG).

Respondents were asked to indicate how prepared Silverleaves was to withstand and recover from potential coastal erosion or flooding in the future, with 89 per cent saying they thought there was a lot more planning and preparation required, and 171 saying they thought coastal erosion was the biggest threat to the area.

“Complete and permanent inundation and destruction of the whole Silverleaves and Woodland Avenue region, (which is several kilometres), is imminent within months,” one respondent

said.

“It is extremely serious and extremely urgent and is almost certainly due to the recent man-made wall built west of the region which has changed the sea flow.

“Trees and bush covered sand dunes are eroding up to a metre per week and hundreds of homes will be lost within months if urgent engineering is not undertaken.”

About 30 respondents said they were frustrated by delays and bureaucracy and 174 respondents gave their ideas on how the Silverleaves foreshore could be made more resilient, with most calling for immediate action to protect the foreshore, including short-term and long-term planning.

There was mixed support for engineered solutions, such as rock walls or groynes, as well as softer solutions, including sandbagging and revegetation.

“The overall sentiment leaned towards protecting the shoreline with a rock revetment, groynes, or sandbags,” the report found.

The survey results will inform the next draft plan, expected to be released this month, which will include community consultation and with a final plan to be released in June.

DEECA is currently working with consultants FSC Range on the plan.



Residents say they are increasingly fearful of upcoming king tides inundating their properties at Easter, with the biggest 3.55m due on May 1.

Reference group

DEECA also announced the 11 members of the new community reference group, who will also give input to the plan.

The members are: Claerwen Jones, Giles Thompson, Jarvis Weston, Jenny Kinder, Lindsay Byrne, Louise Hill, Martin Walker, Natalie Gray, Sally-Ann Matthews, Stephen Lapin and Tristan White.

Residents say they are increasingly fearful of upcoming king tides inundating their properties at Easter, with the biggest

3.55m due on May 1.

More than 4000 people last month signed a petition to the Victorian Parliament calling for urgent government funding to build a sandbag wall, with funding finally announced last week (see separate story).

Retreat

Meanwhile, a report by the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute has recommended governments develop a land database for resettlement and retreat due to the risk of rising

sea levels and coastal erosion.

The report, called “Integrating housing policy, settlement planning and disaster management”, said retreat – relocating households or whole settlements away from high-risk to lower risk areas – was “often politically controversial and rarely a preferred option”.

“To support the resettlement of communities before or after a disaster, planners could develop a database of suitable land,” the report said.

“However, with current growth pressures and the desire for further urban development, it may be difficult to reserve land for resettlement.”

The report, which reviewed academic literature, found housing policy, and disaster preparedness and response were not well coordinated across Australian governments.

Managed retreat is politically controversial and rarely a preferred option due to the psychological impact on households.

It recommended retreat schemes could be supported by the insurance industry, allowing people to rebuild in another area after a disaster, and there should be incentives for homeowners to build or retrofit above the required standard following a disaster.

Details: engage.vic.gov.au/silverleaves-coastal-adaptation-pathways

State Government commits to erosion funding

From page 1

place before the king tide on April 1, so at least it gives the residents the best chance of avoiding inundation.”

Bass Coast Mayor Rochelle Halstead welcomed the State Government funding.

“This funding is a vital step in protecting our coastline and ensuring the safety of our community. Coastal erosion is a significant issue, and we are pleased to see the Victorian Government taking action,” she said.

“We would encourage the government to prioritise the important strategic work underway – and commit to a plan for Western Port.”

Sandbags

The Save Silverleaves petition, with 4370 signatures, was tabled in state parliament in February, with bipartisan support.

The petition called on the government to urgently fund the proposed geotextile sandbag wall and work “with the community to plan and fund long term solutions to mitigate and manage coastal erosion”.

In November, the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) proposed the sandbag wall, costing up to \$500,000, as an interim measure to stop further erosion.

This followed an “angry” community meeting in August where residents demanded answers to accelerating erosion in a “hotspot” near Sanders Road.

The geotextile revetment will be a 2.6m high wall with interlocking small sandbags, that can be “modified, relocated or removed in the future”.

However consultant Andrew Pomeroy, who designed the revetment solution, cautioned in November it could have an impact on erosion downstream.



With the waves lapping metres at their property boundary, residents last month lodged a petition with the Victorian Parliament demanding urgent action, which has now proved successful. Residents from left to right: Steve Lapin, Tristan White, Christine Irvine, from the Silverleaves Conservation Association and Natalie Gray.

He said the sandbag wall would hold the line of erosion in the current location, but would not recover previously lost land.

“That does not mean there might not be erosion in other areas not managed by this particular intervention,” Mr Pomeroy said.

“Hopefully there will be minimum impacts downstream, although impacts may still occur.

“Where the works end we will probably expect to see impacts at that location as well.”

Mr Pomeroy said the sandbag wall could be up to 350m long, with a longer wall preferred,

ending at an area that has more stable, accumulated sand.

Other funding

Minister Dimopoulos announced Inverloch would receive funding to enhance protection and safe access for the Surf Club, which was expected to be completed by the end of September.

At Tooradin a seawall would be repaired.

“We are doing what we can to keep access and areas safe from coastal hazards,” Jordan Crugnale said, adding further details would come with the statewide announcement this week.



Swan Lake on the Summerland Peninsula epitomises Phillip Island's dry conditions, with neither swans or a lake on show for visiting tourists.

The dry continues

WEATHER

Water storages continue to drop following a summer of below average rainfall, with farmers reporting challenging conditions.

According to the Rhyll weather station, January received 31mm, under the average 39.5mm, while in February there was 32.2mm (average 37mm).

And in December there was 39mm (average 45mm), with overall totals not enough to claw back from a dry winter and spring.

Candowie Reservoir is now about 46 per cent, which compares to 76 per cent at the same time last year, however Westernport Water continues to dodge water restrictions by accessing Melbourne water storages.

Victorian Farmers' Federation Bass president Bill Cleeland said hot and dry conditions were “getting worse and worse”.

He said while the February storm filled some dams, many paddocks were unusable with pastures now shrivelled, and he was now feeding hay reserved

for winter to his 160 breeding cattle.

“There are a few trends emerging. One is stock getting out on to roads trying to get to fresh grass,” Bill said.

“The other is that a farmer on French Island lost lambs when they walked out to the middle of the dam to get fresh water and got stuck in the mud and drowned.”

Bill said farmers were now relying on the autumn break at the start of April.

He added that Phillip Island was unlikely to get drought relief as some parts of Bass Coast – such as Wonthaggi – had received better rainfall.

Westernport Water has reminded residents that permanent water savings rules apply, which includes: A hand held hose must be fitted with a trigger nozzle and be leak free; and residential or commercial gardens or lawns can be watered with a hand held hose at any time, or by means of a watering system between the hours of 6pm and 10am on any day.

Fortune terns for threatened species

WILDLIFE

Phillip Island Nature Parks is celebrating 65 Critically Endangered fairy tern chicks fledging at a newly extended breeding site on the island for the first time since 2020.

The incredible conservation achievement marks a monumental year for the fairy terns, after the Nature Parks improved the breeding habitat for the seabirds.

Since 2016, the only successful breeding in the Western Port and Port Phillip region was on Phillip Island in 2019/20 when 31 fairy tern pairs fledged 49 chicks. Since then, there has been no successful breeding of fairy terns due to pests, weed infestation and human disturbance.

The site – twice the size of the Melbourne Cricket Ground stadium – expanded the breeding habitat of the seabirds away from the shoreline after high tides inundated nests in 2023.

The project is one of the success stories outlined in the 2024 Threatened Species Report, released this month (see separate story), which recognises the collaborative conservation efforts by the Nature Parks, researchers and the community to protect threatened flora and fauna on Phillip Island.

As well as the positive breeding season for fairy terns, highlights of the past year include:

- The historic reintroduction of 12 Critically Endangered bush stone-curlews to Phillip Island.
- A successful 2023-24 breeding season for hooded plovers, resulting in 12 pairs successfully



Nature Parks is celebrating a successful year, with 65 Critically Endangered fairy tern chicks fledging at a newly extended breeding site on the island.

raising 10 fledglings, achieving a fledging rate of 0.83 per pair – well above BirdLife Australia's benchmark of 0.5 fledglings per pair.

- Maintaining the island's fox-free status, while intensifying measures to control feral cats that pose a threat to native wildlife.
- The Endangered Eastern barred bandicoot continuing to thrive with the population spreading across the island.

Jessica McKelson, General Manager of Conservation, said the year's efforts had been rewarded with some big strides in the protection of threatened species on Phillip Island.

"Most importantly, these successes would not be possible without collaboration. We cannot do this important work alone, and the community had been central to our many achievements over the past year," Ms McKelson said.

"The contribution of 10,977 hours from student interns, vol-

unteers and community groups have been integral to supporting our threatened species targets and making a real difference to the impact we make.

"Together, these results demonstrate what can be achieved when we work together for a shared thriving and biodiverse future."

She said the Nature Parks was also grateful to the Victorian Government for its financial support of initiatives to protect threatened species.

The fairy tern project involved the collaborative efforts of the Nature Parks, Birdlife Australia and Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation, which were supported by a \$55,000 investment from The Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action's Nature Fund.

In addition, monitoring of the fairy terns by Birdlife Australia was supported by a Victorian Government \$15,000 Icon Species grant, and partnerships with the Penguin Foundation and Melbourne Water.



Volunteers from Rhyll Coast Action worked with homeowners to dead head an extensive agapanthus border facing the northern coastal reserve.

Deadhead your agapanthus

GARDEN

Rhyll residents responded to the call to deadhead their agapanthus.

While popular in many gardens, the plant is classified as an environmental and invasive weed and can overwhelm native vegetation when it escapes from a domestic garden.

The Rhyll Coast Action group spokesperson said they were pleased with the results of their working bee last month, where they worked with three local homeowners to dead head their extensive agapanthus borders facing the northern coastal reserve.

Other volunteers worked to dead head agapanthus growing in roadside areas at the southern end of Rhyll.

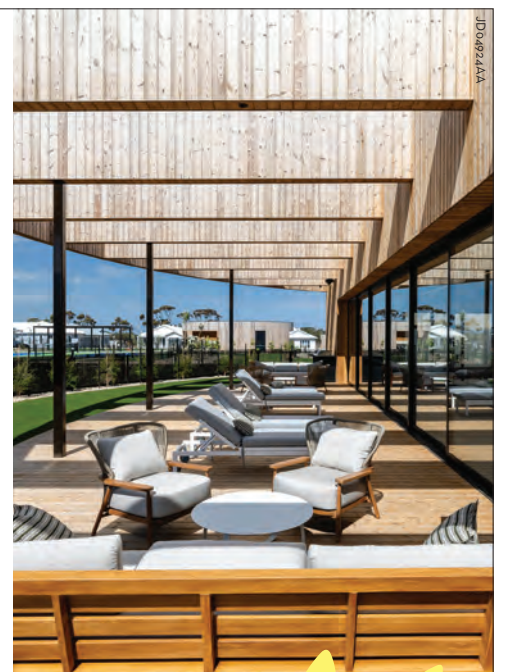
Overall, more than eight green bins were filled with the

dead headed plants.

"Introduced plants like agapanthus from South Africa are often listed as environmental weeds because they pose such a threat to the values of our natural ecosystems by invading native plant communities, which reduces plant diversity resulting in loss of habitat," a Coast Action spokesperson said.

"These plants do not belong to the Phillip Island ecosystems. Please use your green bins and deadhead your flowers before they turn to seed to better protect our natural environment."

Anyone wanting further information can contact the Rhyll Coast Action group by email: rhyllcoastaction@gmail.com or find them on Facebook: Rhyll Coast Action-Phillip Island. New members are always welcome.



OVER 50s LIVING

Our Clubhouse *is Now Open!*

We're excited to announce that the stunning Lifestyle Phillip Island Clubhouse is officially open. Featuring multi-million dollar amenities, including a state-of-the-art 25-metre pool, a fully-equipped Pilates studio, and a private cinema, it's the perfect place to relax, unwind, and enjoy.

Come visit us at 498 Settlement Road, Cowes, and take a tour of the beautiful new Clubhouse as well as our state-of-the-art stunning display homes designed with downsizers in mind.

Discover why so many are choosing to make the move. For more information, call us at 1300 50 55 60.

We can't wait to show you around!

[lifestyle phillip island](#)

Lifestyle
COMMUNITIES

Life.
Unlimited.

Your say, for arts' sake

CONSULTATION

Bass Coast Shire Council is asking for input into a new public art strategy, with a survey now online on the Engage Bass Coast website.

An in-person consultation session was also held at Berninnet on Tuesday.

The new public art strategy will cover the next 10 years, so if you have thoughts or ideas about how public art is best used across the island and the shire, now is the time to have your say.

"Public Art can be created in many different forms to be visually and physically accessible to the public, to enhance community connection to a place or site," council stated.

"Public Art is proven to enhance the aesthetic appeal of public spaces, provides a gathering point for communities, and offers sustained employment and professional growth for local artists.

"The vision for the new Public Art Strategy 2025-2035 is to foster creativity, cultural expression, and community engagement through impactful and diverse public art commissions.

"Our goal is to embrace new approaches that empower artists and community stakeholders, encourage experimentation and



An online survey for input on a new public art strategy closes on March 16. An example of existing public art is "Excuse Me Mr Seagull" by Paul Jesse, a nod to San Remo's fishing history.

challenge conventional boundaries which lead to the creation of dynamic and thought-provoking public art experiences."

There were three in person sessions held during March, with the final

session on March 16 at the Wonthaggi Union Community Arts Centre from 2.30pm - 6pm.

The online survey is open until March 16. engage.basscoast.vic.gov.au/arts-bass-coast



Volunteers getting in the spirit of the high tea fundraiser to be held on March 21. From left Sue Hines, Suzie Ashton and Elisa Bentley.

PICAL tea fundraiser

COMMUNITY

Help support the work of PICAL - and those in the community who are struggling - with a high tea fundraiser on Friday March 21.

A little piece of Paris will come to Cowes for the event - which promises sweet and savoury treats and bottomless teacups - to be held at the Phillip Island Community and Learning Centre, 3pm-5pm, 16 Warley Avenue.

PICAL is still aiming to fundraise \$80,000 by July this year, with the funds raised to replenish depleted reserves and sustain operations following the recent wage debt liability.

Donations can also be made at any time through the PICAL website.

"We are asking for your support, this will enable us to continue helping more than 60 people that visit PICAL every weekday and to keep delivering our support services," the website states.

In the last two years the neighbourhood house has: distributed 9000 food hampers, cooked 11,000 meals, and helped 7000 food pantry users "who aren't certain where their next meal will come from, sadly half of these people are children".

PICAL has also helped 350 people in dire situations experiencing homelessness, fleeing family violence or other personal trauma and helped more than 120 people to find employment

To book your tickets go to: www.socialplanet.com.au/activity/view?id=31928 or go to pical.org.au/copy-of-get-involved

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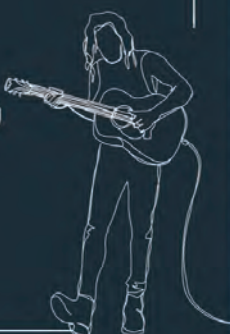
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Painting auction for Endometriosis Australia

FUNDRAISER

Artist Sharnee Taylor has painful personal experience of Endometriosis and is using her art to make a difference.

Recently she raised \$350 for the cause through her exhibition at Clay & Co, and is now auctioning one of her paintings to raise further funds.

The painting, a stunning Phillip Island beach landscape consisting of dual canvases (diptych), is currently displayed on her website (www.sharntayillustration.com), with a silent auction underway.

The diptych is valued at \$1295, and Sharnee said all money raised from the auction will go to Endometriosis Australia.

The auction will be online until the end of March, with the highest bidder notified on April 1.

Sharnee is also hoping to create a local support group for Endometriosis sufferers.

"All those years I wished I had someone who understood how I felt. So I want to be that person for other people, to give advice but also to listen."

"I want to tell them to speak up for themselves and not let



This stunning Phillip Island beach landscape is being auctioned on artist Sharnee Taylor's website (www.sharntayillustration.com), raising money for Endometriosis Australia.

medical people tell you you're wrong, they need to push for the answers.

"If anyone wants to join they can email me at contact@sharntay.com," she said.

Phillip Island's own Fleetwood Mac

MUSIC

An explosive rise and a blistering hot summer run of festival and headline shows has poised Phillip Island band, the Foxy Junes, as one to watch.

Formerly playing under the name Vann Amos, lead singer and frontman Jonah Vann Amos said the Foxy Junes are the natural evolution and five-piece manifestation of a solo project he started in 2019.

"At first I was just going solo, and then the band kept evolving behind me," Jonah said. "Then when we landed on the current lineup, it just felt perfect."

Comprised of Jonah, Orlando Kane-Gillard, Imran Sadiqzai, Kirby Fuller and Marlo Doogue, much of the band either grew up on Phillip Island or now call it home. Many also work in hospitality jobs across the island to support their music.

While frontman Jonah says the band's proximity and connection to the coast has a certain influence over their music, the band made a conscious decision to steer away from the more surf-rock style.

"We do see a lot of surf-rock down this way," Jonah said.

"We wanted to do surf rock but with more of a classic twist on it and bring it to that 70s kind of sound."

Marlo Doogue, on vocals and keys, said the band's sound is "definitely 70s inspired pop funk."

"The guys love to improvise and add a bit of pizzazz and fun to music. It's so much fun playing upbeat and fun music too – and Jonah can sing anything so it's a really good mix. Think of us as Fleetwood Mac but funky and transported to 2025."

While Fleetwood Mac may be the most obvious comparison, the band covers an eclectic



Orlando Kane-Gillard, Marlo Doogue, Kirby Fuller, Jonah Vann Amos and Imran Sadiqzai make up the Foxy Junes: one of the hottest young rising bands on the island. They're appearing at the Bass Coast Surf Film Festival on March 15, at 6pm.

breadth of musicians and styles, including Elton John, Rupert Holmes, Chappelle Roan and Pacific Avenue.

On the horizon

The band formed in November last year and have already played around 20 shows – including drawing heaving crowds to a twice packed-out Westernport Hotel as headliners, and playing a prime slot at local festival NYE on the Hill.

The band's focus is now on releasing music, with the lead single for their upcoming album, Birdsong, due to be released shortly.

"(Birdsong) is hopefully going to be the springboard to see if people like what we release. It's going to be a lot of recording over winter, but we're also going to try and gig as much as we can."

Along with releasing an album this year, Jonah said an East Coast tour is "the big dream" at the moment.

And if the true mark of good music is that it brings people together, then the loving, grooving, smiling crowds at any one of their gigs is a testament to the fact that this little band from Phillip Island will go far.

Most recent member of the band, Marlo Doogue, said playing in the Foxy Junes was one of the main reasons why "moving to the island was literally the best decision of my life".

"I honestly was really excited when I joined the band, because I really see it going places," Marlo said.

"They're all such amazing musicians, and I'm learning things from them every day."

The Foxy Junes will be playing at 6pm between sessions at the 2025 Bass Coast Surf Film Festival at Berninnet on Saturday March 15. Film festival tickets are available at www.basscoastculturalvenues.com

The band will also be gracing the stage at The Wooli Tavern, on Saturday March 29.



Caught in the Act, are playing on Sunday March 16, at the Phillip Island Bowling Club in Cowes, from 2pm – 4.30pm.

Caught in the Act in Cowes

JAZZ

On Sunday March 16, Phillip Island Jazz Club presents Caught in the Act at the Phillip Island Bowling Club from 2pm.

Caught in the Act is an instrumental band playing a wide range of music: from exciting Latin tunes and jazz-funk (fusion) adaptations of standards to gentle songs from the 30s.

They last performed on the island in 2022 and Jazz Club members are looking forward to their return.

Caught in the Act was formed by Ann Craig and Kevin Blazé in 2016 to feature the flute playing exciting instrumental music.

The concept rapidly broadened to incorporate saxophone,

strong piano and guitar, all held together by an outstanding rhythm section.

The band has played at many regional jazz festivals, at the Brunswick Green, private gigs, at the Australian Jazz Convention and each month at Jazz on Sundays at the Ringwood RSL.

Their line-up comprises Ann Craig (flute/percussion), Ashley Thomas (sax/clarinet), Kevin Blazé (guitar), Malcolm Hornby (piano), Frank Morgan (bass) and Simon Atkinson (drums).

Caught in the Act, Sunday March 16. Phillip Island Bowling Club, 40 Dunsmore Road, Cowes from 2pm – 4.30pm.

For more information or to book your ticket, please contact Jill Boyce on 0417 416 300.



An exhibition at Berninnet as part of the Bass Coast Surf Film Festival on March 14-15 includes photographs, posters and merch from Phillip Island National Surfing Reserve, as well as surfboards and memorabilia from the collection of island surf legend Laurie Thompson.

Surf's up at Berninnet

EXHIBITION

Surfers and lovers of all things surf related are in for a treat this weekend, when the Bass Coast Surf Film Festival opens at Berninnet.

The film festival screenings on March 14 and 15 will be accompanied by a free exhibition organised by the Phillip Island National Surfing Reserve.

The exhibition includes photos, posters and merch from the surfing reserve, which was officially launched in 2013, with the coveted Dave Fincher Memorial Trophy also on display.

Plus there will be surfing memorabilia from the island's rich surfing history, with some

never before displayed surfboards from the collection of island surf legend Laurie Thompson, and boards by kneeboard champion and shaper Neil Luke.

For anyone with a love of surfing or an interest in the island's surfing history, this is a must-see display.

The Bass Coast Surf Film Festival is at Berninnet in Cowes with screenings at 7pm on Friday March 14, and 4pm and 7pm on Saturday March 15.

The National Surfing Reserve exhibition will open from 6pm on Friday, and 3pm on Saturday.

Tickets for the film festival available at: www.basscoastculturalvenues.com/live-at-berninnet-cowes

Get your shorts on

FILM

The third Bass Coast Shorts film festival returns in April, showcasing the talents of local film makers.

The films will screen across the Anzac Day weekend, with four separate screenings at Berninnet.

Screenings are also at the Archies Creek Hotel.

Bass Coast Shire Council and Australian Short Film Festivals have once again come together to support this initiative, spearheaded by festival director John Frohlich.

John has also launched the Archies Creek Hotel Thursday night short film nights in the lead-up to the film festival, a community collaboration with the Archies Creek Arts Collective.

"The objectives of the Thursday night film nights are simple," says Frohlich.

"To foster a love of short films, to create an interest in the forthcoming Bass Coast Shorts festival and ultimately to develop opportunities and skills for local film makers, both aspiring and emerging."

Bass Coast Shorts is a competition-based festival with submissions coming in throughout the year and awards in three categories: schools (under 18), local (South Gippsland), and open (everywhere else).

"The judges have been impressed by the quality of the entries so far," says Frohlich.

"Local film makers like Steve Dunn, an Inverloch-based diver and expert in marine flora and fauna, and Jess McGuirk, an award-winning Wonthaggi student, have produced thought-provoking documentaries of particular interest to the Bass



The third Bass Coast Shorts film festival April 24-27, showcasing local film makers. The films will screen at Berninnet and Archies Creek Hotel.

Coast community."

The program will feature award-winning national and international films and animations.

As part of the festival there will also be forums and Q&As with filmmakers and screen industry guests, some screenings at Archies Creek Hotel and a two-day workshop for emerging filmmakers in the lead-up to the festival.

There are 12 different categories for the short films, including local, under 18, documentary, animation, music video, coastal life, First Nations stories and emerging talent.

Screening times for the Bass Coast Shorts film festival are:

- Thursday April 24, 7pm-9pm (Sneak peek), Archies Creek Hotel
- Friday April 25, 6pm-9pm (Opening night screening), Berninnet
- Saturday April 26, 2pm-4pm

(Screening), Berninnet

- Saturday April 26, 4.30pm-5.30pm (Free festival forum), Berninnet

- Saturday April 26, 6.30pm-9.30pm (Screening and awards), Berninnet

- Sunday April 27, 3pm-5pm (Closing screening, Archies Creek Hotel)

Each screening is a different program of short films showcasing selected entries. The festival forum is free and features Q&A with an industry guest. All welcome.

Tickets are \$20 per session (\$14 concession) online from the Bass Coast Shire Council website, Trybooking or from the box office (Berninnet sessions) or at the door (Archies Creek Hotel sessions).

Tickets: www.basscoast.vic.gov.au/bass-coast-shorts-film-festival-2025-berninnet
www.asff.net.au/bass-coast-shorts



Mayor Cr Rochelle Halstead enjoying the IWD launch at RACV Resort in Inverloch with Bass Coast Shire Council staff.



Bass Coast Mayor, Cr Rochelle Halstead with Rebecca Fairthorne (Salt Law) and guest speaker Hacia Atherton.



IWD guest speaker Hacia Atherton with independent candidate for Monash, Deb Leonard.



Scout working on the mural, a project with artist in residence Elizabeth Gleeson. More photos at pisra.com.au/education



Ziggy and Casey enjoying painting the murals which showcase the native fauna and flora of Bass Coast.

San Remo students paint new mural

EDUCATION

Freshly arrived Year 7 students at the Bass Coast College (BCC) San Remo Campus now have an extra special reason to feel connected to their school.

Under the watchful eye of professional artist Elizabeth Gleeson, 175 Year 7 students became muralists themselves and transformed the vegetable beds which adjoin the school's kitchen and overlook Bass Strait.

Elizabeth Gleeson is a professional muralist and fine artist of international acclaim and visited the San Remo campus as part of an Artist in Residence program. Having transformed spaces across the globe, Eliza-

beth guided the Year 7 students in design and delivery of seven stunning murals which showcase the beautiful native fauna and flora of Bass Coast.

"The program enabled our students to work collaboratively, to become muralists themselves, and to make connection to the land on which they live and go to school," said Coralie Buckley, the Arts KLA Coordinator of BCC San Remo.

"The mural allows for every year 7 student to have a sense of belonging to their school."

Dozens of different animals and plants were brainstormed during the design process, with students settling on: banksias, proteas, kangaroo paws, pen-

guins, echidnas and sting rays – amongst a trove of other Bass Coast biota.

Ms Buckley said the stylised motifs of the flora and fauna were realised with a limited colour palette of teal, orange, grey, yellow, red and green.

The orange and teal were used to reflect the colours of the internal spaces of the San Remo Campus, while the circular shape central to each mural drew upon the campus' architectural aspects.

"Students learnt about colour mixing and applying paint to a vertical surface, whilst also developing skills around actively listening and respecting one another's ideas," Ms Buckley said.



CWA president Lorraine Roy (left) presented vice president Beverley Robertson with a 10-year service award at this month's meeting. Bev has been a past president and "contributed greatly to the Cowes CWA", said Lorraine.

Ten years of service

COMMUNITY

The March meeting of the Philip Island CWA saw a presentation by Audika Hearing Clinic Cowes.

CWA president Lorraine Roy also presented vice-president Beverley Robertson with a 10-year service award.

Lorraine reminded the community the CWA is a philanthropic organisation of women

supporting women, children and families across Victoria.

"We cook, we craft and we advocate for change, while always remaining relevant," she said.

"Members would love to see you anytime in the shop during opening hours, or at our next meeting on the first Thursday each month at 1pm."

The Cowes CWA branch celebrates its 90th birthday and 55th anniversary in April.



At the March meeting members heard from Ruby and Katlin from Audika Hearing Clinic Cowes (left and centre), with CWA president Lorraine Roy. Members were reminded to be aware of the health of their ears, have annual check-ups and the general impact hearing loss has on the community and socialisation.

One Nation in the race for Monash

ELECTION

One Nation has announced Kuljeet Kuar Robinson as its candidate for Monash in the upcoming federal election.

Kuljeet Kuar, a mental health nurse from Cranbourne, said she is committed to protecting Australian jobs, industry, agriculture and manufacturing, and is stepping up to ensure regional communities like those in Monash receive the attention and investment they deserve.

"Our leaders have forgotten who they serve. They prioritise corporate interests, foreign ownership and short-term political gains while everyday Australians struggle with the rising cost of living and job insecurity," Kuljeet Kuar said.

"We need strong leadership that prioritises Australian workers, supports our local industries and protects the future of our regions.

"The destruction of Australian manufacturing has been one of the biggest betrayals of our country.

"We need to bring back industries that provide secure jobs, reduce reliance on foreign imports and ensure that Australians have access to quality, locally made products."

Kuljeet Kuar said energy affordability was another key issue for the people of Monash, particularly as rising power costs continue.

"Australians are paying some of the highest energy



One Nation has announced Kuljeet Kuar Robinson as its candidate for Monash in the upcoming federal election.

prices in the world, despite our country being rich in natural resources.

"We need an energy policy that benefits Australians – not global corporations or overseas interests."

Kuljeet Kuar said she also believes in protecting Australia's natural heritage and ensuring that environmental policies are balanced with the needs of local communities.

She advocates for sustainable development that supports farmers, regional businesses, and families without imposing unnecessary re-

strictions that stifle growth.

"I stand with Pauline Hanson and One Nation because they fight for everyday Australians," Kuljeet Kuar said.

"It's time to put our country, our industries and our people first."

Switch

In last year's local government elections in November, Kuljeet Kuar ran in the Quarters Ward in Casey.

She received 13.27 per cent of first preference votes.

At the time, she told local media she was a member of

the Labor Party, but was running as an independent candidate.

Since then, she has switched alliances, citing the Labor Party's decision to provide support to a Muslim candidate as "concerning".

"This situation led me to feel that I could no longer place my trust in the Labor Party, as it appeared they were not being transparent with their members, let alone the general public," she told the Advertiser.

"While I had not been particularly active within the Labor Party, I came to realise that the party no longer represented the values of hard-working Australians, such as myself.

"I have long had respect for Pauline Hanson; however, I was not initially aware of the full scope or presence of One Nation.

"My decision to run with One Nation stems from a growing frustration with the current political landscape and a sense that everyday Australians are not being genuinely represented," she said.

"Over time, I found that my values and priorities aligned more closely with the vision that One Nation advocates – particularly in areas such as strengthening the economy, ensuring national security, and addressing issues concerning immigration and local communities."

www.facebook.com/kuljeet-robinson/



Volunteer Jill removing litter from the Scenic Estate Conservation Reserve, at the FOSEER Clean Up Australia Day event.

FOSEER cleans up

ENVIRONMENT

A dedicated group of volunteers attended the Clean Up Australia Day event at Scenic Estate.

This is the 10th annual clean up, hosted by the Friends of Scenic Estate Conservation Reserve.

A group spokesperson said it was their most successful clean up event, collecting two bags of thistles and four large bags of litter.

The haul included cardboard, a large sheet of plastic, polystyrene foam, cans, broken glass, glass bottles, plastic bags and bottles, dog poo bags, metal sheets, a large piece of disintegrating pink insulation, half a bag of bitumen and several sign posts.

The next FOSEER working bee on Sunday May 4, will focus on the removal of woody weeds such as gorse from the estate.

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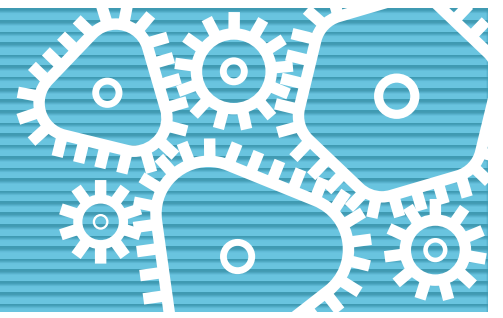
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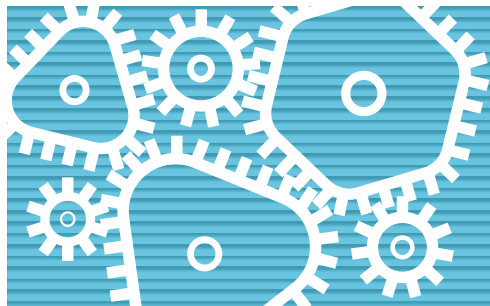
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Life members present at the Phillip Island Patchworkers' 40th birthday. Debbie Love, Jeanette Clark, Marg Olsen, Annemarie Campbell, Carolann Wake and Marj Wagland. More photos at pisra.com.au

Patchworkers celebrate 40-year milestone

CRAFT

Phillip Island Patchworkers celebrated its 40th birthday on March 1. The party was held at Newhaven Hall, and attracted more than 60 people.

The party included current and former presidents and several of the original members.

In a nod to its history, attendees were encouraged to bring along their very first quilt to hang around the hall.

Bringing their creative abilities to the table, literally, each table provided their own decorations, with a competition for the best table.

The thriving club had a humble beginning back in August 1984, when some women started taking patchwork lessons with Glenda Frost.

The following year, when Glenda became too busy with her dressmaking, the women decided to form a group and meet up each month.

Membership grew slowly, and new instructors came on board, with Isobel Addicoat taking daytime lessons, and Sue Slater offering night classes.

The quilting group became official on March 26, 1985, with 11 women present at the inaugural meeting. Displays of the women's work were often held in the Community House over the Easter weekend, and on Australia Day.

As membership grew, a decision was made to host an Annual Display at Newhaven Hall on the Melbourne Cup long weekend, a tradition that continues to this day.

Workshops, retreats

As the group continued to grow, workshops and weekend retreats



Members of the Corinella Patchwork group (anticlockwise from right): Kim Hill, Christine Klopogge, Fiona De Jong, Doreen McGuirk, Di Ireland, Celia Hendriks, Paula Clarke, Nelly Berkers, Lyn Bird, Elaine Smith, Lyn Nagy and Julie Best.

became part of the calendar.

In 1989 the first weekend workshop was held at the Christian Youth Camp (CYC) in Church Street, Cowes, under the direction of Sue Slater.

The event was so popular it was soon followed by the first Patchers Weekend, run by Phillip Island Patchworkers over the Mothers' Day weekend.

Around 60 women attended from across Victoria, and the weekend included four tutors from Melbourne teaching various techniques.

Subsequent weekends have been held over the Mothers' Day weekend, nowadays attracting around 120 attendees from across the country, with five tutors.

Meetings

For patchwork enthusiasts, there are currently several different groups operating in the shire, which all cost \$5 to attend.

- Nocturnals meet on Monday evenings from 7.30pm until

9.30pm at Newhaven Hall.

- Marie's Day is a meeting on the second Tuesday of each month, at the Newhaven Yacht Club. It runs from 10.30am to 2pm.
- The Shearwater group meets on the third Tuesday of the month, 10.30am - 2pm at the Phillip Island Golf Club (café on site).
- Heritage meets on the fourth Tuesday of the month at the National Vietnam Veterans Museum from 10.30am to 2pm (café on site).
- Corinella Crafties meet every Wednesday from 10am at the Corinella Community Centre (cost is \$4).
- Wonthaggi Patchers meet on the first and third Friday of the month from 10am to 2pm at the meeting room in the Cricket Club Rooms at the Wonthaggi Rec Reserve.
- Saturday Sit and Sew meets on the first Saturday of the month from 10am at the Newhaven Hall.



Original Members present on the day: Joan Ray, Dianne Crumpton, Carolann Wake and Marj Wagland.



As the sole government secondary college in Bass Coast, Bass Coast College (BCC) is proud to be able to provide quality education to around 1700 students.

Bass Coast College poised for success

EDUCATION

Around 320 year seven students were welcomed to Bass Coast College (BCC) this year, with the school continuing to focus on excellence in learning and wellbeing through a holistic approach to education.

In the words of Bass Coast College (BCC) Acting Principal Leith Cummins, it is "an exciting time in education" at the school.

At the end of last year, staff at the school began training in the Berry Street Education Model, a framework designed to increase the engagement of students with complex and diverse learning needs.

"At the heart of our efforts is a commitment to creating a positive, inclusive and engaging environment, where every student feels supported to thrive academically, socially and emotionally," Ms Cummins said.

"This model equips our teachers with practical strategies to build stronger relationships, promote self-regulation, and create safe, predictable learning environments."

This year, 39 VCE subjects are offered at BCC along with nine VET (Vocational Education and Training) studies delivered on campus.

Plumbing, health services and hospitality programs were also introduced this year due to growing demand.

Ms Cummins said the school was continuing to build on last year's "fantastic" VCE results, which saw 90 per cent of students expected to receive first-round offers to tertiary studies.

Last year's dux, Raphael Spiteri-Stevens received an ATAR of 97.85, with eight students scoring an ATAR of over 90.

Leadership team changes

Ms Cummins said to support the college's work around student wellbeing and engagement, BCC has strategically built a strong leadership team to work with students, staff and the community.

Ms Cummins, who has been

with BCC for seven years, took over the role of acting college principal at the beginning of semester two last year and will continue in the role for term one 2025.

Assistant college principal Emma Harris is focused on the professional development of staff and is working with learning specialists within the college on identified strategic initiatives.

Each individual campus also has their own principal, with the three mainstream campuses (Wonthaggi, Dudley and San Remo) also having assistant principals for student engagement. Other staff leadership roles include two assistant principals dedicated to teaching and learning, as well as an assistant principal for student wellbeing and a business manager.

At the end of last year, Alison Gill took on the role of campus principal at Wonthaggi, with former campus principal Ross Bramley stepping into the role of student engagement.

Darren Parker, who has been college principal for several years, has been on leave from the start of semester two, 2024, and will continue on leave in term one 2025.

"Quality education"

"As the sole government secondary college in Bass Coast, we are really proud to be able to provide quality education to around 1700 students in total," Ms Cummins said.

"We are proud of the achievements of our college, and the significant success achieved by staff and students in recent years.

"Growing student population, new campuses and the addition of many high-quality staff has been rewarding, but throughout it all the key focus has been on BCC's academic and holistic support of its students.

"This remains our very clear focus and we are particularly well placed for this with the high-quality support team available for families."



Taking in the surroundings of Mt Stirling National Park, Newhaven College Year 10 students appreciate how lucky they are to have such an incredible experience.



Year 10 students work together to map their route at Mt Stirling National Park.



Year 10 students celebrate reaching elevation at Mt Stirling National Park in February. More photos at pisra.com.au/education

College goes camping

EDUCATION

Year 10 students from Newhaven College recently headed to Mount Stirling for a school camp.

The college said the benefits of school camps for students of all ages cannot be underestimated.

"Connection with nature, developing resilience, greater independence and building relationships are just some of the many advantages of a school camp experience.

"At their best camps can be transformative experiences that leave a lasting impact on students' lives," the college stated.

For Newhaven College Principal Tony Corr, the benefits of camps provided by the College are clear.

"Camps remain a central part of the school experience. Whilst other educational sectors have had to compromise or remove camp programs, Newhaven continues to offer valuable overnight and camp experiences tailored

for each year level," he says.

At the recent Mount Stirling camp, attended by 86 students and nine staff, students enjoyed perfect weather as they challenged themselves in the Victorian high country.

"Being away from home and away from their creature comforts is a profound challenge for many young people these days," Head of Senior School Brett Torstenson said.

"Nevertheless, most of our Year 10 cohort embraced the

outdoors, challenged themselves both physically and mentally, and returned to school the following week wiser and better for the experience, and hopefully with a greater appreciation for all that exists in the great outdoors."

Camps at Newhaven College begin in Year 2, when the students enjoy a sleepover on campus. After a display by the CFA, pizza and a movie, they snuggle in together in the Junior School Assembly area. The

Year 5 camp to Sovereign Hill is always a highlight of the school calendar, and of course, Year 9 have the opportunity to experience Melbourne with the City Sites camp and the memorable Wollangarra hike and camp.

All camp experiences are included in the College tuition fees.

For more information about Newhaven College's curriculum and extra-curricular activities, visit the website, or visit the school at the Open Day (March 15) or a College tour.



Newhaven College Year 4 students lead the entire Junior School with picking up rubbish around campus. More photos at pisra.com.au/education

Students clean up

EDUCATION

Every year, Clean Up Australia Day inspires schools and community groups to clean up, fix up and conserve

the environment.

This year, students at Newhaven College tackled the school grounds, collecting bags of rubbish.

Clean Up Australia pro-

vides kits to schools, including rubbish collection bags and gloves.

It estimates over 4400 schools take part in the annual clean-up day.



John, Quentin and Steve at the Red Rocks and Saltwater Coastcare working bee in January. The next event is on April 27.

Red Rocks working bees return

ENVIRONMENT

The Red Rocks and Saltwater Coastcare group held a successful working bee in January, the first for 2025.

A team of 13 volunteers turned out to clean up litter and weeds along the Red Rocks picnic area, fire trail, tracks, Penguin Avenue and the dunes.

Several bags of litter were collected, including bottles, cigarettes and plastic, while thistles, polygala and sea spurge plants were removed from the dunes east of Red Rocks up to the McRae Avenue track.

The working bee finished with a cup of tea and cake.

The group holds working bees on the last Sunday of the month, from 10am until 12 noon.

Dates for 2025:

April 27: Red Rocks Weeding

May 25: Saltwater Creek Weeding

June 29: Saltwater Creek Annual Planting

July 27: Red Rocks Annual Planting

September 28: Red Rocks Weeding

October 26: Red Rocks Weeding



Laurie Bennett organised for Billy Bellinger and Keith Ahlers to compete in his McLaren M1B, after their cars failed to arrive from the UK in time to compete. Photo: Nici Cahill, Snapshot Photography

Helping hand at classic car race

MOTORSPORT

With entries from every state in Australia, New Zealand, United Kingdom and the USA, this year's Phillip Island Classic was a feast for lovers of historic racing.

Over the weekend, fans and competitors flocked to the Grand Prix Circuit to witness classic racing, with some cars never previously seen in Australia.

Regarded as the largest historic motor race in the Southern Hemisphere, the Phillip Island Classic – Festival of Motor Sport is renowned for attracting some of the finest historic race cars in the world and this year did not disappoint local and international fans.

There were also great stories of sportsmanship and support coming out of the weekend event.

Laurie Bennett from Tarrawarra in Victoria, helped out some fellow drivers from the UK, when their attempt to compete didn't quite go to plan.

"Two drivers from England shipped their cars in early December, but they had still not arrived in time for the race on March 7," explained Laurie's wife Jan.

"Keith Ahlers has brought his Lola

Mark 1, the first one built and Billy Bellinger the Morgan Plus 4 Super Sports, also owned by Keith.

"Billy maintains both cars and the two often share hour long races in Europe."

But with the cars still in transit, the pair looked like they'd have to watch from the sidelines, until Laurie stepped in.

"Laurie has raced with both of them in Europe over many years, in his McLaren M1B," Jan said.

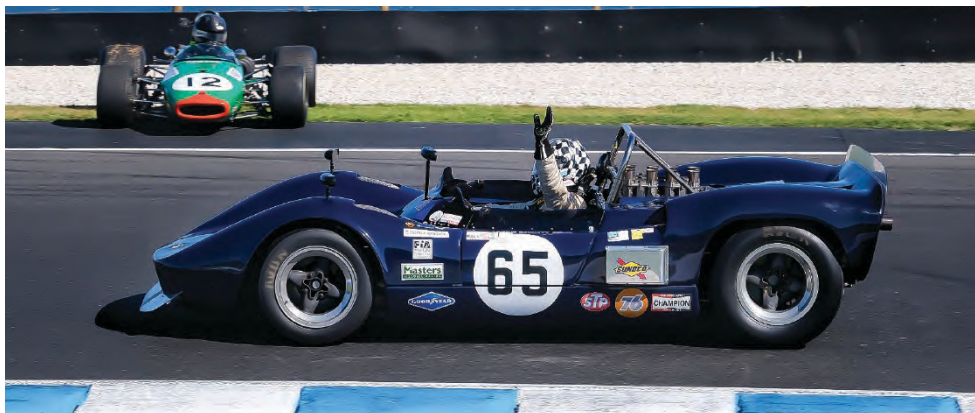
"With the supportive assistance of the Victorian Historic Racing Register, Laurie arranged for both Keith and Billy to qualify and compete in his immaculate McLaren, in separate categories.

"He also bought his red Elfin F2 as a spare, which he ended up driving.

"All the drivers are so thankful for the assistance and encouragement given to Keith and Billy," Jan said.

"It certainly makes racing exciting," She said the Phillip Island track is regarded in the top racetracks in the world, together with Spa (Circuit de Spa-Francorchamp in Belgium) and Goodwood Motor Circuit in the UK.

Details of the event at: www.vhrr.com.au/philip-island/classic



With the assistance of the Victorian Historic Racing Register, Laurie Bennett arranged for both Keith and Billy to qualify and compete in his McLaren, in separate categories, after their cars didn't make it to Phillip Island in time to compete. Photo: Nici Cahill, Snapshot Photography.

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Full send at Thredbo Interschools

MOUNTAIN BIKING

Bass Coast mountain bikers recently competed on the national stage at the annual MTB Interschools at Thredbo from March 3 – 7.

Perfect weather blessed 17 competitors and their families who made the annual trek to Thredbo with 14 students from Newhaven College's MTB's Academy, two students from Cowes Primary School and one from Bass Coast Secondary College all representing their schools at the prestigious event.

Thredbo MTB Interschools event is the largest schools' mountain biking event where 1700 students represent over 300 schools.

Students compete in four events in an action packed, week-long schedule, participating in All Mountain, Flow, Pump and Downhill Races.

With strong results from everyone across the Bass Coast MTB contingent, a standout performance came from Year 3 Kody Sheers (Cowes Primary School) placing 5th in both the All Mountain and Flow events being bottom age in Division 5 (Years 3 and 4).

Another rising star from Cowes Primary School, Isla Basterfield



The Bass Coast MTB group who recently put on a stellar performance on the national stage at the annual MTB Interschools competition.

(Year 6) put on two strong performances in Division 4 (Years 5 and 6) placing 6th in the All Mountain and 8th in the Flow events.

Other very strong showings came from Newhaven College Year 8's Maxen Mills and Miller Macillef in the ultra competitive Division 3 (years 7 and 8).

Maxen placed 11th in All Mountain, 16th in Flow and 22nd in downhill out of 250 competitors earning event bragging rights over his fellow teammates and important points for his school.

Ride of the week went to close friend Miller who placed 11th in the grueling Down Hill race on Thredbo's notorious Cannon

Ball run finishing with a massive whip on the humongous table top jump at the finish much to the excitement of his supporters.

Overall Newhaven College's MTB teams' depth was on display with a successful showing taking an impressive 5th in the hyper competitive Division 3 where 110 schools were represented.

With MTB's popularity on show with representatives from Years 3 to 10, a hot topic of discussion is the pending implementation of the Bass Coast MTB strategy, with families agreeing on the urgency for our own local MTB infrastructure to be invested in as soon as possible.



Congratulations to last week's winners on 38 points (from left): Phil Wright (S), Alex Martin (L) and Rob Jeffrey (3).



Best on game winners: Lindsay Stevenson (2), Gillian Harper (3), Bobby Arnold (L) and Steve Edge (S) (not pictured).

Midweek at Loch

BOWLS

Last week the Southwest Gippsland Bowls Club took their midweek challenge to the Loch and District Bowls Club.

Competitors were welcomed to the rink by John, whilst Rob and David prepared teams, and Trevor alongside Alex got the green ready.

Fifty players headed out into mild and overcast weather.

Congratulations to last week's winners on 38 points: Phil Wright (S), Alex Martin (L) and Rob Jeffrey (3).

Runners up on 34 points: Gwen Jeffries (2), Marianne Scales (L), Steven Muhi (3) and Trevor Loughridge (S).

Best one game winners on 18 points:



Runners up: Gwen Jeffries (2), Marianne Scales (L), Steven Muhi (3) and Trevor Loughridge (S).

Lindsay Stevenson (2), Gillian Harper (3), Bobby Arnold (L) and Steve Edge (S).

The club give their thanks to Trevor for his hard work along with their congratulations to the San Remo pennant players on their win last week. This week, the club will meet at Lang Lang.

Results from the league

TENPIN BOWLING

Phantom (week one): 1st on 28 pts Disco Ball, 2nd on 26 pts Filthy Frank and 3rd on 24 pts Asymbl.

2s Company (Mondays – week five): 1st on 11 pts King Pins, 2nd on 11 pts Him & Her and 3rd on 10 pts Palms.

Almost Bowling Legends (Wednesdays – week five): 1st on 62 pts Storm, 2nd on 61 pts Pinpals and 3rd on 61 pts Dreamers.

Business League – Early (Thursdays): 1st on 11 pts Balls Deep, 2nd on 9 pts Turkey Slappers, 3rd on 9 pts NTC and 4th on 8 pts Happy Hour.

Business League – Late (Thursdays): 1st on 10 pts City Lights, 2nd on 9 pts Team Rich, 3rd on 7 pts S&R Clarke Auto and 4th on 2 pts Balls of Fury.

Top scores across each league:

Men: Jason Bence (235), Scott Lynch (221) and Raff Merante (210).

Women: Valma Peterson (159), Mary Daroha (155) and Sarah Mercuri (150).



In the lead up to International Women's Day, Woolamai Beach Surf Life Saving Club acknowledged the contribution of women and girls to the club.

Club celebrates girl power

SURF LIFESAVING

In the lead up to International Women's Day, Woolamai Beach Surf Life Saving Club acknowledged the contribution of women and girls to the club.

On social media, it spoke to female rising stars and current club leaders.

Lifesaver Hannah Crow said she loved the "incredible sense of community and belonging" in the club, right from her first experiences as a Nipper.

Board member Emma encouraged other girls thinking of joining to "give everything a go", while Mia Davies named Jas Keurschner and Ellie Ryan as her biggest inspirations.

Ellie Ryan, the club's chief instructor said her time at the club had helped her deal with challenging communications and people from diverse backgrounds, beliefs and experiences.

"The pure joy and passion that runs through the club and everyone in it is so inspiring. The people at Woolamai hold this incredible warmth and positivity and I feel so lucky to be a part of it."

For club member Phoebe Clarke, lifesaving has been "one of the most inspiring and uplift-



Ellie Ryan, the club's chief instructor said her time at the club had helped her deal with challenging situations, and she was inspired by her fellow lifesavers.

ing things in my life", saying it offered an opportunity for women to excel and show strengths that otherwise may have gone unnoticed.

Club member Emily said being part of WBSLSC had given her "the skills, confidence, and sense of responsibility to make a

real difference in someone's life".

"It has taught me the value of teamwork and the importance of staying calm under pressure, knowing that the training I've received can help save lives when it matters most."

To find out more, or join, visit www.woolamaibeach.org.au/

Teams battle for early season dominance

DARTS

Ten teams – all hungry for early season dominance – took to the Phillip Island and District Darts Centre last Monday clashing in five tough matches.

Miramar showcased formidable form, leaving Deadly Darts reeling with a decisive 6-1 victory.

Dart Vadars followed suit, demonstrating their precision with a 5-1 triumph over the Mustangs.

Breakers continued their impressive streak, leaving no room for doubt with a 6-0 whitewash against the Riverboys.

Not all matches were one-sided however.

Aulin and the Storm battled tooth and nail, with Aulin ultimately edging out a 4-3 win.

The Vikings also celebrated their first victory of the season, narrowly defeating Joe's Hornets 4-3.

Off the oche, Will was grinning from ear to ear after snagging the coveted San Remo Butchers meat tray.

Bob meanwhile, was equally pleased to take home the refreshing beers.

The Phillip Island and Districts Darts League will resume for Round 3 on Monday March 17.



Will Kennedy was grinning from ear to ear after snagging the coveted San Remo Butchers meat tray during last week's darts competition.

Results from the green

GOLF

Tuesday, March 4

Men's 18H Stableford

Overall winner: John Gains (24) with 41 pts.

A Grade winner: A-1 Callum Farman (8) with 38 pts.

B Grade winner: B-1 Ray Reid (14) with 38 pts.

C Grade winner: C-1 John Gains (24) with 31 pts.

BDL: 34 pts C/B.

NTP: 5th Mark White, 7th Ray Reid, 5th Mark Collison, 17th Max Disher.

Men's 9H Stableford

Winners: Neil Dewar (33) with 22 pts from Col Cordery (30) on 20 pts.

BDL: 16 pts.

Wednesday, March 5

Women's 18H Stableford

Overall winner: Lesley Meadowcroft (14) with 35 pts.

A Grade winner: Lesley Meadowcroft (14) with 35 pts.

B Grade winner: Marilyn Jamieson (33) with 37 pts.

C Grade winner: Celeste Quinton (37) with 35 pts.

BDL: 30 pts C/B.

NTP: 7th Celeste Quinton, 10th Septiana Cochrane, 17th Patricia Jamieson.

Women's 9H Stableford

Overall winner: Sara Gordon (44) with 21 pts from Lorraine Brown (37) on 20 pts.

BDL: 14 pts C/B.

Thursday, March 6

Open 18H Stableford

Overall winner: Steven Sloss (12) with 42 pts.

A Grade winner: A-1 Steven Sloss (12) with 42 pts.

B Grade winner: B-1 Alf Micallef (16) with 40 pts.

C Grade winner: C-1 Warren Barratt (27) with 38 pts.

BDL: 33 pts C/B.

NTP: 5th and 10th Rowan Wales, 7th Alf Micallef, 17th Wayne Morris.

Men's 9H Stableford

Winners: David Gladman (19) with 19 pts from John Niven (23) on 18 pts C/B.

BDL: 14 pts C/B.

Saturday, March 8

Men's 18H Stableford

Overall winner: Mark Riky (21) with 39 pts C/B.

A Grade winner: A-1 Scott Fullarton (4) with 37 pts.

B Grade winner: B-1 John Wiseman (18) with 39 pts.

C Grade winner: C-1 Mark Riky (21) with 39 pts.

BDL: 32 pts C/B.

NTP: 5th Max Walton, 7th Brett Gibson, 10th Rick Jenkins, 17th Luke Zoanetti.

Great score: Scott Fullarton (eagle hole 14).

Women's 18H Stableford 18H

A Grade winners: A-1 Lorna Evans (38) with 40 pts and A-2 Liz O'Neil (27) with 36 pts.

BDL: 32 pts.

NTP: 7th Alice Schofield, 10th Pip Holloway, 17th Septiana Cochrane.

Open 9H Stableford

Winners: Steve Rieger (24) with 21 pts from Len Fenton (23) on 17 pts C/B.

BDL: 15 pts C/B.

Sunday, March 9

Open 18H Stableford

Winner: Athol Hill (4) with 38 pts from Isaac Batty (+3) on 36 pts.

Red Rocks results

GOLF

with 17 pts C/B.

Saturday March 8

Par Plus

Winner: Brady Ross (Phillip Island Golf Club) (2) +4 pts.

Runners up: Max Walton (Phillip Island Golf Club) (5) +1 C/B and Anne Stone (Victoria Golf Club) +1.

Monday March 3

SGGI Veterans Stableford

Winner: Beverley Sloan (Wonthaggi Golf Club) (19) with 39 pts.

Runner up: David Lucas (Welshpool Golf Club) (9) with 38 pts C/B.

Friday March 7

9H Stableford

Winner: Max Mattock (Phillip Island Golf Club) (12) with 20 pts.

Second place: Jack Keating (Phillip Island Golf Club) (15)

Sunday March 9

Stableford

Winner: Geoff Cohen (8) with 39 pts.

Runner up: Rod Widmer (16) with 38 pts C/B and Ray Pobjoy (4) with 38 pts.

Results from the table

BRIDGE

Phillip Island residents, Jill Short and Caroline Shaw competed in the inaugural MCC Bridge Congress on Sunday March 2, placing 20th E/W in a field of 60.

Congratulations to this novice pair.

Additionally duplicate games at the club were held on Monday and Wednesday afternoons.

Both events saw six full tables and winners included Greg Nicholson and Jean Barbour (64 per cent) alongside second placed Rob and Margot Kilculen (57 per cent).

Following onto Wednesday, Don and Trish Stewart-Uden (60.74 per cent) took victory alongside runners up Moya Crowley and Diane Coleman (58.89 per cent).

TIDE GUIDE

Tidal predictions for Stony Point, Cowes -0.09 Newhaven -0.31 HIGH TIDE IS MARKED IN BLACK							
WED 12 MAR	THU 13 MAR	FRI 14 MAR	SAT 15 MAR	SUN 16 MAR	MON 17 MAR	TUE 18 MAR	
LOW 4:55 am 1.33 m	HIGH 12:38 am 2.49 m	HIGH 1:45 am 2.54 m	HIGH 2:41 am 2.61 m	HIGH 3:26 am 2.67 m	HIGH 4:02 am 2.69 m	HIGH 4:33 am 2.70 m	
HIGH 11:07 am 2.27 m	LOW 6:17 am 1.29 m	LOW 7:31 am 1.15 m	LOW 8:30 am 0.99 m	LOW 9:15 am 0.83 m	LOW 9:52 am 0.70 m	LOW 10:25 am 0.60 m	
LOW 5:16 pm 0.90 m	HIGH 12:39 pm 2.26 m	HIGH 2:00 pm 2.37 m	HIGH 3:04 pm 2.53 m	HIGH 3:54 pm 2.68 m	HIGH 4:34 pm 2.79 m	HIGH 5:10 pm 2.87 m	
	LOW 6:39 pm 0.95 m	LOW 7:51 pm 0.93 m	LOW 8:49 pm 0.90 m	LOW 9:36 pm 0.88 m	LOW 10:15 pm 0.89 m	LOW 10:50 pm 0.91 m	

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



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