



PHILLIP ISLAND & SAN REMO

# ADVERTISER

YOUR COMMUNITY VOICE!

Thursday, January 30, 2025

\$1.80 Incl. GST



## Soaring temps and sweeping storms

Kieren Williams was on the Cowes foreshore on Monday afternoon when storm clouds swept towards the island around 4.20pm. "I saw the storm coming up the bay as we were sitting on the grass under those magnificent Cypress trees at the front beach," Kieren said. "I grabbed my Samsung phone just in time." Kieren dubbed the photos "Stairway to Heaven". "It seemed surreal until the rain came and everyone had to scramble for cover. Just another awesome Australia Day holiday." Yesterday's temperatures in the high 30s were about 10 degrees higher than the January mean temperature, according to the Bureau of Meteorology's records.

## Pool finances released, ahead of renewed push

### SPORTS HUB

Phillip Island's pool committee has released 24 years of financial reporting following persistent community questioning on the use of donated funds.

The release of the details comes as there is renewed hope of a public pool being built in the medium future – dependent on state or federal funding – with whispers of a shift in council priorities and a renewed push in the lead up to the federal election.

Last year, during council elections, all Island Ward candidates

supported Cowes' proposed new sports hub, on the corner of Phillip Island and Ventnor roads, including the pool.

At its annual general meeting at the end of last year, the Phillip Island Aquatic Centre Fund (PIACF) released updated and simplified financial reporting, which this month was posted on the PIACF website.

The report shows a total income of \$302,458 since 2000, which includes \$136,000 in fundraising, \$14,000 from the buy-a-brick campaign and \$66,655 in donations.

Expenditure in that 24-year

period was \$212,281, with a current balance of \$90,176.

One of the biggest costs over the past two decades was \$79,500 for two B24 aeroplane hangers in 2003, with the costs to dismantle, insure and transport them from NSW – to house a potential pool – costing \$67,766.

Ultimately, in 2010 – after council requested the hangers be removed – PIACF gave one hangar to the Vietnam Veteran's Museum and later sold one to a crane company for \$22,690, with those losses also incurred in expenditure.

Another hefty cost of more

than \$29,000 came from consultant fees for five feasibility studies requested by council, produced and paid for by PIACF.

Costs have also included public liability insurance (\$22,642), required for every public event.

Office expenses (\$13,349), include paying for a domain name, while subscriptions (\$10,397) include computer software.

Fundraising costs were more than \$12,800, which included holding a ball in the mid-2000s.

### Questions

Community questions about the fundraising money have

persisted over the years, with social media last week seeing more residents concerned about "where all our donation money ended up".

Continued page 10



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Grace Wilkinson and Albert Depares, encouraging people to come and visit the PICAL Fix it Café, when it opens on February 4. It's located at the Community Garden, 117 Settlement Road, Cowes.

## PICAL launches Fix it Café

### COMMUNITY

PICAL is excited to launch the Fix it Café for the island community from February 4.

This is a new initiative led by PICAL volunteers and supported by the Phillip Island Bicycle Users Group.

Initially, the Fix it Café will be open 1am – 3pm every Tuesday starting on February 4. Items fixed include furniture, crockery, toys, sports equipment, bikes, skateboards, scooters, prams, sewing items and putting together flat packs.

“If you have something else to fix then bring it down as our attitude is to give all repairs a go,” said David Rooks, PICAL centre manager.

The Fix it Café is located at the PICAL workshop – the large shed on the site of the PICAL Community Garden, at 117 Settlement Road, in Blue Gum Reserve (behind

the Creative Arts Station).

“Some of the principles underpinning the Café are to develop community skills and create connections,” David said.

“The service is an on-the-spot service where it's hoped you join in the fix and develop your handyperson skills.”

The Café is not a drop and run service or a dumping ground for goods. Should parts be required to purchase for the repair this is at the owner's cost.

Donations are welcome for work completed. The Phillip Island Bicycle Users Group is supporting the Fix it Café by providing a member to be volunteering alongside Colleen.

Don Turner from the group is always keen to see more people riding more often and the Fix it Café supports this moto.

“We hope you can use this new offer and meet the Fix it Cafe team,” David said.

## POLICE BRIEFS

### Aggravated burglary #1

A house in Redwood Avenue, Cowes was the target of an aggravated burglary about 11pm on January 22.

An unknown offender cut the fly wire on an open window to enter the house, while the occupants were asleep.

The offender stole keys to a grey Audi from the kitchen before fleeing with the vehicle. The stolen Audi was then reported fleeing from the BP service station at Caldermeade the following day, after failing to pay for petrol.

Then on January 24, the same car was observed by police in Rowville at 3am, but sped away from officers along the Monash Freeway.

Bass Coast Criminal Investigation Unit is investigating and anyone with information is urged to contact Crimestoppers on 1800 333 000 or Wonthaggi Police Station on 03 5671 4100.

The offenders rammed open the rear door to the restaurant to gain access.

Bass Coast Criminal Investigation Unit is investigating and anyone with information is urged to contact Crimestoppers on 1800 333 000 or Wonthaggi Police Station on 03 5671 4100.

### Jet ski rage

Police are continuing to investigate an incident believed to have occurred at Magic Lands Beach on January 19.

About 7am, an altercation occurred between a surfer and a male jet ski rider, when it is alleged the jet ski rider may have undertaken activities which put the surfer at risk, and the jet ski was riding in excess of the speed limit.

It is believed the jet ski may have had two children as passengers on it initially during this altercation, however during the second part of the altercation the two children may have returned to the beach.

A female was nearby in the water at this time and witnessed the incident.

Anyone with information should contact Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000 or at [crimestoppersvic.com.au/report-a-crime/](http://crimestoppersvic.com.au/report-a-crime/)

### Aggravated burglary #2

Two cars were stolen in an aggravated burglary in Uringah Court, Cowes on January 22.

The offenders entered the home while the occupants were asleep, cutting the fly screen on an open window to gain entry, before stealing a wallet and two keys to a VW Amarok and a silver Mercedes Benz.

Bass Coast Criminal Investigation Unit is investigating and anyone with information is urged to contact Crimestoppers on 1800 333 000 or Wonthaggi Police Station on 03 5671 4100.

### Beach fire warning

Police say there has been a rise in the number of illegal beach fires being lit over the summer holidays, including one at Cape Woolamai on January 26.

Lighting a fire anywhere, at any time in the fire danger period is illegal without a permit and anyone caught will be prosecuted in court.

### Restaurant theft

Bani's Restaurant and Bar in Thompson Avenue, Cowes had a large sum of cash stolen, in addition to a CCTV camera and hard drive.

The burglary occurred sometime between 9.30pm on January 16 and 10am on January 17.

### Lost your keys?

Some keys were located in a taxi overnight on January 26 in the Phillip Island area and are now at the Cowes Police Station.

Please contact Cowes Police on 03 5952 2037 if they belong to you.

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Authorised by Russell Broadbent MP, Independent Federal Member for Monash, Warragul

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Peter Dibsdale has run Cowes Taxis on the British Isle of Wight for the last decade with six drivers.

# Drunk dial taxi fail

**COMMUNITY**

A taxi driver 17,000km away has kindly requested Phillip Island locals and visitors to please stop calling him to order a ride.

Peter Dibsdale has run Cowes Taxis on the British Isle of Wight for the last decade, with six drivers.

And he said for many of those years – with the exception of Covid – the team has received up to three calls per day from “mainly men” and “mainly drunk” customers wanting a ride from Cowes, Phillip Island.

Peter, 63, said the problem started when he paid for Google ads, which boosted his advertising profile.

Ever since anyone who Googles “Cowes taxis” gets his company on the island that lies off the south coast of Britain and – to make matters more confusing – also has a Ventnor, as well as a Newhaven not far off on the mainland.

Even more confusing is the fact Phillip Island’s former pub was called the Isle of Wight.

“I’m getting calls in the middle of the day our time from mainly men, I must admit, mainly drunk, who want a lift home from the pub in Cowes after a night out,” Peter said.

“I said to one of my drivers lately that this needs to stop because when we’re really busy it can be frustrating to get so many calls.

“But he said don’t stop, I enjoy talking to them. My main driver loves it. He puts the Australians on loudspeaker so his customers can hear as well.

“Australians have a sense of humour that’s similar to ours



Peter Dibsdale from Cowes Taxis in the UK, says he gets up to three calls per day from “mainly men” and “mainly drunk” customers wanting a ride from Cowes, Phillip Island.

and there are some calls that are very funny and we do have a laugh.”

As Google had caused the problem, last week Peter decided to Google Phillip Island’s local paper to call us and alert locals to the problem, asking that customers could continue to call but ideally not in their peak holiday period in August.

“Given all the bad stuff that’s happening in the world I thought it would be good to have something nice and light to talk about.”

**Sister city**

Peter said whenever he informs the Aussie caller he was in the United Kingdom and not Phillip Island many “normally swear” and some become concerned at the cost of the international call, while others carry on bantering.

He said every August the Isle of Wight runs Cowes Week, a major yacht regatta, and one year an Australian called during the week to ask for a taxi.

Peter – thinking they were from Phillip Island – was about to hang up until he realised it was a local call from an Australian yachting.

“One of the funniest conversations I had was with a guy who asked if we grow weed on the Isle of Wight, because it’s famous for pot-smoking at a festival.”

Cowes, Phillip Island and Cowes, Isle of Wight, have had a long association, including for many years as sister cities, with children from Cowes Primary School writing letters to their Cowes, UK, school pen pals for many years.

According to historians our Cowes was named by Cox, the Government Surveyor at the time of settlement, after the port on the Isle of Wight.

Peter grew up on the Isle of Wight from the age of 10 and worked throughout his career in the Royal Navy, travelling the world, but only stopping briefly once in Australia in Perth.



Built in 1873, in recent years the Cowes jetty shed has been home to a summer restaurant, but is currently closed for renovation.

## Sauna? Art gallery? Cocktails? What now for the jetty shed?

**COUNCIL**

The heritage shed on the Cowes jetty should become a sauna, youth drop-in centre or ice-cream shop, according to community feedback.

Since December, Bass Coast Shire Council has been calling for input on the future of the jetty shed, which will be considered by council when developing an expression of interest to attract a long-term tenant.

So far there have been a range of suggestions, with feedback open until March 2, but with the popular vote (30 votes) going to a beach or surf-style café.

Also popular are other hospitality proposals such as a seafood restaurant, fish shop and with one suggestion the shed “should not be limited by one hospitality”.

“It needs diversity, to move from coffee to cocktails,” suggested one respondent on the council’s online feedback page.

Although Lisa said another eatery would deny business to nearby traders and so the shed should instead be a tourist information hub, “a place to book tickets, get bait to fish off pier, get info, listen to live music, have good quality souvenirs and a hub for local artists and local history”.

One quirky option could be an outdoor equipment hire shop. “Think stand-up paddle boards, snorkelling equipment, e-

bikes, or beach cricket. Help visitors and locals enjoy the outdoors without the need to purchase and transport equipment to the foreshore,” the respondent said.

Built in 1873, in recent years the shed has been home to a summer restaurant, but is currently closed for renovation.

“The historical Cowes jetty shed is currently in review with an exciting opportunity to reimagine its future,” the council’s Engage website says.

“Council would like to consider the community’s vision of the space and ask what you want to see there.

“We also want to understand how our community and visitors engage with the space. For example, would you like to see it open over winter, nighttime trading hours, or open weekends.”

Over the years, the shed has had many uses and in recent years was home to The Jetty restaurant, renowned for its paella nights over the summer.

In October, the owners of the restaurant were told the building would be closed over summer for urgent repairs.

The shed is currently vacant and the new lease will be approved later this year.

The land and site is owned by the council and the Department of Energy Environment and Climate Action (DEECA).

Details: [engage.basscoast.vic.gov.au/cowes-jetty-goods-shed](http://engage.basscoast.vic.gov.au/cowes-jetty-goods-shed)

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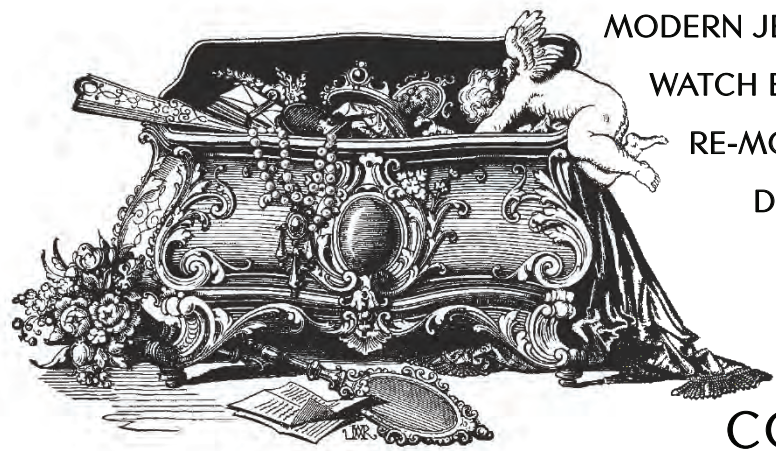
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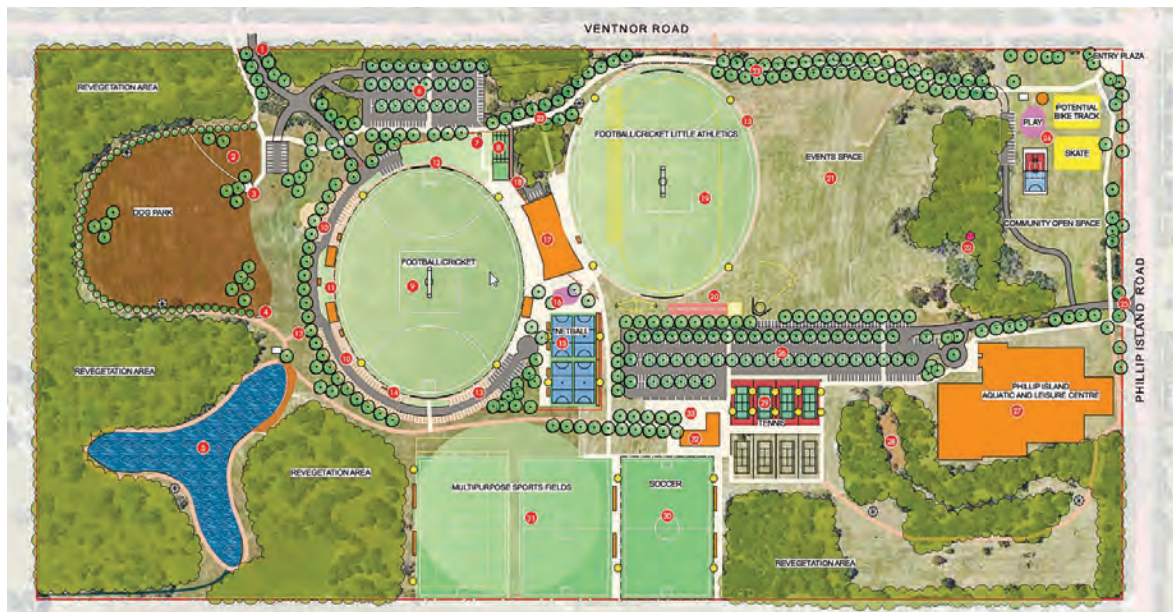
REPAIRS

GIFTS



COWES

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A dog park (marked in brown on the left) is promised in the Phillip Island Recreation Master Plan, for the proposed sports hub on the corner of Phillip Island and Ventnor roads. It is listed as a quick, short-term project at a cost of \$605,000.

# Petition calls for fenced dog-park

## COMMUNITY

A new petition is calling for a fenced off-lead dog park for Phillip Island.

The petition, started by resident Harmony Baron on change.org, states there is “a glaring need” for such a park.

“This petition aims to lobby the Bass Coast Shire to establish an off-lead fenced dog park,” Harmony writes.

“Our community is filled with loving pet owners who don’t have a suitable space for their four-legged friends to roam freely and safely.

“Without this crucial amenity, the exercise and socialisation needs of our dogs are not met effectively.”

She added that dogs regularly exercised were healthier and had better social skills.

A dog park is listed for development in the Phillip Island Recreation Reserve Master Plan, which was passed by council in 2023.

The plan details the larger sports hub for the corner of Phillip Island and Ventnor roads and is listed as a quick, short-term project at a cost of \$605,000.

The petition is so far signed by about 200 people, with signatory Frank agreeing.

“This dog park is very much needed on Phillip Island ASAP. Dogs need a place to roam legally and there is plenty of space here on the island for what is needed,” Frank said.

Mary said a dedicated park would avoid impacting wildlife while Miffy said it would be “a valuable addition to the island”.

### What do we want?

On social media, the issue also ran hot.

Vanna wrote the dog population was increasing alongside the permanent population and a dog park was a “low cost ask”, particularly two parks – one for large active dogs and one for smaller timid dogs, also requesting more dog beaches.

“Getting sick of the council avoiding this issue and not delivering what they promise,” Vanna wrote.

Lee wrote a fenced park would be a “god send” because “I can’t take my dog anywhere off lead as she is dog reactive”.

Paul said continued approvals for housing development had not seen “supporting infrastructure”.

Lisa said her limited mobility meant she could only use a dog park for her two dogs.

Bec said she wasn’t a fan of

off-lead dog beaches and a park would be best.

“It’s not just about dogs attacking each other it’s also more for our wildlife, they have a right to live freely without being attacked,” Bec said.

“We’ve also had our older dog attacked by a small friendly dog before both on lead just sniffing.”

Paula also supported a dog park as dog owners on beaches showed “utter disregard” for the rules.

Several people suggested an upgrade to Blue Gum Reserve in Cowes to become a fenced dog park.

The Blue Gum Reserve Masterplan 2019 proposed a dog off leash area, however stalled after concerns dog owners “don’t always closely supervise their dogs and there have been numerous incidents where dogs have been intimidating or caused injury to other people/dogs”.

According to the masterplan, the council said signage and education were important to help dog owners better understand the expectations of dogs in public spaces.

Establish an Off-Lead Fenced Dog Park in Phillip Island details: [www.change.org/p/establish-an-off-lead-fenced-dog-park-in-phillip-island](http://www.change.org/p/establish-an-off-lead-fenced-dog-park-in-phillip-island)



Local energy expert Tony Wolfe and independent candidate for Monash, Deb Leonard at the climate and energy forum in Inverloch last week.

## Energy and climate concerns at community forum

### ELECTION

It was a full house at Dirty Three Wines in Inverloch last week for a community forum about the future of energy in the region.

Hosted by independent candidate for Monash, Deb Leonard, and local energy expert Tony Wolfe, they said the event provided a platform for residents to share their perspectives and connect the dots between our energy transition and the climate crisis.

“This event was a wonderful opportunity to hear directly from the community,” said Deb.

“It’s clear that people care deeply about how the energy transition will affect their lives, jobs, and the future of the region.”

The discussion emphasised Australia’s progress in renewable energy, with 40 per cent of the country now powered by renewables, and highlighted the potential for regional leadership in the shift toward cleaner energy.

Tony Wolfe, who has decades of experience at the Loy Yang coal power station, and in community consultation addressed the challenges of transitioning from coal while advocating for policies that ensure community benefits.

“Energy is treated like a political football,” Tony said.

“We need a minority govern-

ment supported by an independent crossbench to hold decision-makers accountable and ensure the best outcomes for communities like Inverloch.”

He also raised concerns about nuclear energy as a costly and impractical option, citing unresolved safety, water usage, and timeline issues.

### Questions

Deb said residents raised thoughtful questions during the Q&A session, touching on critical topics such as ensuring dividends for local communities from large-scale renewable projects and protecting jobs during the energy transition.

She expressed her gratitude for the candid conversations.

“Hearing directly from people in Inverloch and surrounding areas helps me better understand their concerns and aspirations.”

“These conversations are crucial for shaping policies that address the climate crisis while ensuring that no one is left behind.”

She said the well-attended event underscored the community’s engagement with energy and climate and the desire for practical, people-centered solutions.

For more information, visit Deb Leonard’s campaign page at [www.debleonard4monash.com.au](http://www.debleonard4monash.com.au).

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# Power out as temperatures soar

## ELECTRICITY

Over 5000 local properties were without power for almost eight hours on Monday, after a lightning strike just after 8am.

The timing couldn't have been worse for businesses in San Remo, Cape Woolamai, Newhaven and Kilcunda, coming on the final day of the busy Australia Day long weekend.

"We were open today, but the power gods had other ideas," posted San Remo store Cape Winds on their social media accounts.

Phillip Island Nature Parks also posted on social media saying: "Churchill Island Visitor Centre and farm precinct will be closed on Monday January 27 due to a power outage caused by severe weather. Walking trails will remain open. We apologise for any inconvenience this may cause to your travel plans."

After originally estimating the power would be back on by 11.55pm that night, AusNet eventually restored power to most customers by 3.30pm.

Residents reported a massive clap of thunder just before the power went out.

A spokesperson for AusNet said the cause of the outage couldn't be determined, but it was "most likely as a result of a lightning strike".

"The electricity network in this area is protected with bushfire mitigation technology - Rapid Earth Fault Current Limiters (REFCLs)," the AusNet spokesperson explained.

"Due to the high fire danger on the day, this technology was set on its most sensitive setting to protect the community, which increases the chances of outages.

"It also means it can take longer to restore power."

The AusNet helicopter was deployed, in addition to ground crews, to assess



Over 5000 local properties were without power for almost eight hours on Monday. AusNet deployed its helicopter and ground crew to assess the situation, with power restored to all properties by late afternoon.

the situation.

Customers had power restored progressively throughout the day, with AusNet saying all properties were back on by late afternoon.

### Difficult day

With temperatures across the area soaring to 38 degrees, it made for a hot and difficult day for affected residents, while many businesses suffered from loss of holiday trade.

Some, like San Remo IGA and the San Remo Hotel switched to generators to keep the doors open.

"The power might be out, but our generator's got us covered," posted the San Remo Hotel.

"We're still serving up cold drinks and hot meals from 12."

Even when the power was restored, it was too late for some businesses to open, unable to set up or prep for evening trade.

Power outages have unfortunately become a regular occurrence in recent years, with dramatic consequences for businesses during busy holiday periods.

Last Easter (April 2024), over 3000 island customers lost power on two consecutive nights due to lightning strikes,

with some remaining offline until the following morning.

In February, wild storms across the state saw power outages for around 45 per cent of the AusNet network, with most properties on Phillip Island and San Remo restored within 24 hours.

The storms left many businesses without power on Valentine's Day, traditionally one of the busiest nights for local restaurants.

In October 2023, 3000 customers in Cowes were without power for seven hours due to a connection failure.

And in June 2022, for the second time in two years, Phillip Island plunged into darkness at the start of the long weekend, with around 9000 properties losing power, including the busy retail and hospitality area of Cowes.

AusNet said property owners impacted by the latest outage might be eligible for compensation, "depending on the total time customers have been without power during the financial year".

Details are available on their website: [www.ausnet.com.au/electricity/compensation-and-service-standards#gsl](http://www.ausnet.com.au/electricity/compensation-and-service-standards#gsl)

# Leonard hits the campaign trail

## ELECTION

Although there is no official date yet for this year's federal election, independent candidate for Monash, Deb Leonard is already on the campaign trail.

In the past fortnight, she has held a climate and energy Q&A in Inverloch (see separate story), and "politics in the pub" sessions at Wonthaggi and Moe.

The Wonthaggi session focused on the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), to provide a platform for NDIS participants, family members, carers, and service providers to voice their concerns and propose improvements to the current system.

Deb described the NDIS as "a minefield", that was impossible to understand and difficult to navigate.

"There are many problems with the system - there is money being wasted on bureaucracy when it could be going to participants, there is inequity in funding, and there is a lack of common sense in decision making."

The consensus on the night was NDIS needed to involve participants in decision making.

### Energy

Over in Moe, the contentious issue of energy was in the spotlight, with



Independent candidate for Monash, Deb Leonard is already on the campaign trail, with three community events in the past fortnight, such as this "politics in the pub" session in Wonthaggi.

Latrobe earmarked as a location for a nuclear reactor under the Coalition's energy scheme.

Deb said while those who attended had different ideas about the future of power generation in the region, everyone one agreed "we need to take the politics out of decision making, and focus on providing reliable, cheap, clean energy".

"We're allowed to have different opinions" she told attendees. "We don't have to all agree, but it's important that we listen to each other, and understand each other's perspectives, because often you'll find that you have

common ground." Concerns around mental health services in the area, and ideas for new tourism ventures were also aired at the get-together.

Deb said she and many others were sick of the "adversarial win/lose style politics we have been seeing in all levels of politics lately, both here and overseas".

She said as an independent she'll work with both sides of politics to get the best outcomes for the region.

"We need to put party politics aside and start focusing on our community."



L:R: WBSLSC Vice President Fi Blackmore, WBSLSC President Jason Close, Community Bank Board director Janice, Vice Chair John and director Bruce, WBSLSC Vice President Nick Reynolds.

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# Can 45 people represent our community?

## COUNCIL

A panel of 45 ratepayers will help determine the priorities of Bass Coast Shire Council for the next four years.

The council last week said 8000 letters had been sent out to ratepayers randomly by consultants Mosaic Lab.

Anyone who receives a letter will have until February 13 to respond and register to participate in the community panel.

Mosaic Lab will then select 45 members that represent the community in age, gender, abilities, area they live or run a business, as well as a mix of housing situations, with the process required under government legislation.

The panel will then help determine four key shire strategies, which are developed every four years after council elections, including the Council Plan, which will guide all work and decision making for 2025-2029, the Long Term Financial Plan, to guide financial decisions, as well as the Community Vision and the Asset Plan.

The community panel comes after the council in July and August last year held a series of events to ask the broader community for feedback on these plans (see separate story).

Panel members require no prior knowledge or experience and anyone selected will need to take part in four workshops between March and May, one online session and three in-person sessions in San Remo.

"Your role will be to represent your community, listen to others and participate in respectful conversations to help make recommendations to council to shape the plans for the next four



Bass Coast Shire Council has sent out 8000 letters to ratepayers randomly from which 45 members will be selected to be part of a community panel to contribute to the Council Plan 2025-2029.

years," the council explained, adding members will receive a \$350 gift card as a thank you.

The council said random selection involved choosing participants by chance from a larger population, without bias, to "mirror" community diversity, and ensuring everyone "has an equal chance of registering their interest and an equal chance (within their demographic) of being selected".

## Response

Island Voice spokesperson Linda Marston – who has a background working with focus groups – said for the panel to be representative it would need to be about 400 people.

"This assumes a confidence level of 95 per cent and a margin of error of five per cent," Linda said.

"Having a small sample of 40-

50 say, renders any output extremely vulnerable to bias."

On social media, many residents questioned the merits of the community panel.

Cape Woolamai resident Graham Jolly, who closely monitors council, asked for the proposed subjects on which the panel will be asked to contribute.

"Or are the subjects matters determined by the panel members," he asked the council.

"Four years ago the former panel numbers dropped away after some left the panel because they were being told instead of asked.

"The number one objective of the Phillip Island people is for the immediate development of the Hilton Chadwick Reserve and the carnival land. Waiting 33 years. The previous panel was shut down on this matter."

A council officer responded

the questions were better answered over a private phone call.

Darren Callesen said he was part of the last panel, saying there were "lots of good results came out of the last round".

"It is set to a point, but plenty of free time to bring up concerns and issues and discuss them," Darren said.

Some questioned the location of San Remo as a panel meeting point, with the officer explaining it was central to all areas, while another resident questioned the cost to Mosaic Labs, with the officer explaining the panel was a form of "deliberative engagement", required under the Local Government Act 2020.

"Councils use expert facilitators to deliver these projects," the officer said.

Details: [engage.basscoast.vic.gov.au/ourbasscoastourfuture](http://engage.basscoast.vic.gov.au/ourbasscoastourfuture)

## SHORT STACK

A QUICK ROUNDUP OF NEWS, VIEWS AND OPPORTUNITIES

### "Worth Every Dollar"

#### Seminar

The "Worth Every Dollar" seminar, presented by Bass Coast Shire Council, is on Thursday February 6, from 10am to 12pm at the Phillip Island Winery. This seminar is perfect for all small businesses including creative and home-based.

Tickets are just \$30, including lunch, and members of local business or trader groups can enjoy a 15 per cent discount.

Led by globally renowned entrepreneur Alexis Guttridge, this event offers actionable strategies to help businesses grow smarter, set ambitious goals, and create sustainable success – all while maintaining a work-life balance.

Tickets at: [worth-every-dollar.eventbrite.com.au](http://worth-every-dollar.eventbrite.com.au)

### Stronger Communities Programme

Russell Broadbent, member of Monash, is now accepting expressions of interest from incorporated not-for-profit community organisations looking to complete a small infrastructure project which provides social benefits for local communities.

Grants of between \$2500 and \$20,000 are available for up to 20 organisations for the Monash electorate. The total cost of your project cannot exceed \$50,000.

For a full overview of grant application and eligibility criteria, please visit: [business.gov.au/grants-and-programs/stronger-communities-programme-round-9](http://business.gov.au/grants-and-programs/stronger-communities-programme-round-9)

Make sure that you read grant guidelines carefully before submitting your expression of interest.

Expressions of Interest submissions close 5pm Friday February 14.

For more information and to apply: [russellbroadbent.com.au/community-hub/grants/](http://russellbroadbent.com.au/community-hub/grants/)

### 2024 HESTA Excellence Awards

Nominations are open for HESTA's Excellence Awards recognising the work of health professionals in aged care, allied health, community services, and disability services.

Until Tuesday, April 8, employers, colleagues, and individuals from the aged care, allied health, community services and disability services sectors can nominate or be nominated for the Individual Leadership or Team Excellence categories.

Each category will have four winners, recognising excellence in each of the four health and community services sectors.

Finalists will be announced on Tuesday, July 8, with the awards ceremony in Melbourne on Thursday, August 7.

[www.hesta.com.au/awards/excellence-awards](http://www.hesta.com.au/awards/excellence-awards)

# Environment, roads and sport rate highly: survey

## COUNCIL

The community has nominated the natural environment as the "most loved" part of Bass Coast, while the biggest priorities should be roads and footpaths, climate change and sports grounds.

In July and August last year Bass Coast Shire Council held a series of events to ask the community for feedback on the council plan for the next four years, which is mandated by the State Government following council elections last year.

The events were a precursor to the creation of a community panel, which will meet between March and May to also give feedback on the Council Plan 2025-2029 (see separate story).

During last year's consultation, more than 230 people gave their feedback to a survey and 326 people attended the events.

Results from the consultation showed the natural environment was the most loved, and area most in need of protection and the highest rated focus area.

The feedback showed the biggest priorities council should focus on included: (1) roads and footpaths; (2) environment and climate change; (3) sports grounds and facilities; (4) supporting local businesses; and (5) playgrounds and open spaces.

The council received hundreds of comments online as well, which included:

- Not to over develop the land; keeping areas available for the native animals;



During last year's community consultation on the future direction of Bass Coast, more than 320 people attended events, with feedback focused on maintaining the environment and "a relaxed coastal lifestyle that isn't over developed".

- New estates have to have large green spaces and parks. Any commercial developments in towns must have adequate parking;
- Maintain a relaxed coastal lifestyle that isn't over developed, with good town connections;
- Swimming pool for Cowes. Fenced dog park in Cowes especially a small area for dog recall training;

- Phillip Island is not forgotten. We pay rates (high) and don't really see any improvements for example our roads are terrible;
- Not completely focus on Phillip Island! Yes, they have the penguins, but there is more to Bass Coast than the penguins;
- There is only one bridge onto Phillip Island so keep development to a minimum. Try to retain village atmosphere and

- avoid all high-rise development;
- Another bridge onto the island. Less congestion on the roads; and
- Zero emissions communities pulling our weight in the climate emergency.

According to the council, 89 per cent of respondents to the consultation lived here, with 51 per cent of respondents in the Island Ward and more than half aged over 60.

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CREATIVE  VICTORIA

# New mayor tackles tough talkback questions

## COUNCIL

Radio callers posed questions on the high cost of garbage charges, the erosion emergency, and “nightmare” Airbnb party houses to Bass Coast Shire Council’s new mayor last week.

Mayor Rochelle Halstead appeared on 774 ABC radio on Thursday with host Raf Epstein in the station’s regular meet the mayor segment.

Paul from Wonthaggi said it cost \$127 for a hard rubbish collection in Bass Coast, while rate-payers also forked out a higher garbage charge than many surrounding councils.

“Transfer stations are reasonably priced in Bass Coast, but a lot of people don’t have utes or trailers and we don’t have access to hard rubbish. You can’t get one. You have to pay for one,” Paul said.

“Most shires offer at least two. What’s the reason we don’t?”

Cr Halstead said it was a financial problem.

“Waste services are difficult for us because of high tourism and there are calls for increasing red bin picks up,” Cr Halstead said.

“It’s an issue that comes up every budget. We are trying to get best bang for buck in waste negotiations. She said council officers were investigating waste services, with new councillors urging a review.

## Airbnb

Darryl from Corinella said he welcomed the council’s short stay rental accommodation



Mayor Rochelle Halstead was last week quizzed by talkback callers on 774 ABC radio.

rules, but said the rules had failed to protect his family home, which was next to a “nightmare” Airbnb rental that since December had been “party city” in their quiet street.

Darryl said the owner of the home lived overseas and he and

his wife had met council officers to find a solution.

The mayor responded saying local government was “limited” in its control of noisy party houses, saying “tourism is incredibly important for our economy” and it was a “fine balance”.

Raf said Darryl was clearly frustrated, and were there any levers the council could pull.

Cr Halstead said he should call Victoria Police and the real estate agent.

“We can’t send our staff into a party, it’s a safety issue,” she said.

When the short stay rental accommodation rule was introduced in 2023, it was touted as the answer to unruly party houses.

The local law places the responsibility for occupant behaviour on the owner of the property, including: requiring a designated contact person who neighbours can report issues to any time of the day or night and can attend the site within two hours of receiving a complaint; and ensuring the maximum number of vehicles is not exceeded.

## Erosion

Natalie from Silverleaves highlighted the area’s urgent erosion problem, saying given the lack of certainty for impacted homeowners, why was council still able to ask for rate payments.

“Council is not providing the money (for erosion works), but they are still asking for rates when we don’t have any certainty the neighbourhood will be here in 12 months,” Natalie said.

“I think it’s unfair for local and state governments to take rates and land taxes based on sales in the past when there is no certainty for people their land won’t be viable in 12 months.”

Cr Halstead said council supported the “urgency around the

issue” and were planning to meet and lobby the state environment minister, but the council did not have the finances or the resources to address the problem, adding erosion wasn’t just happening in Bass Coast.

“There’s an uncertain future for everyone with the climate emergency,” Cr Halstead said.

She added local government was not financially sustainable with the rate cap under inflation, while demands for extra infrastructure were increasing.

“Our budget is absolutely constrained,” she added.

Raf agreed saying the issue of erosion was statewide along with the question of “who will pick up the bill”.

## Dogs

Leigh in Dumbalk called to request more off-leash dog beaches, with two properties in the South Gippsland Shire and one in Melbourne.

Cr Halstead said dogs were “close to my heart”, owning a seven-year-old golden retriever Invy (after Inverloch) and a new 14-week-old golden retriever Sunny (after San Remo).

“I think dogs are an incredible part of society.

“Phillip Island has a big push for protection of wildlife and I’m also someone who finds that incredibly important.”

She said the Phillip Island Dog Association was aware of wildlife issues and educated the community.

“It’s a balance between the two. It’s a tightrope and I’m prepared to walk it.”

# STAY SAFE IN BASS COAST

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

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



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

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

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





# Helping the world, one drop at a time

## FUNDRAISER

If you ever see Emily Hulbert waiting tables at Pino's Trattoria in Cowes, be sure to leave her a big tip.

She certainly deserves one.

Most summers for the past decade, the 29-year-old from Rhyll has waited tables, not only to pay for her "bikepacking" trip around the world – yes, that's correct, riding a bike solo across the four compass points of the globe, so far clocking up about 8500km.

But she has also been fundraising for the Waves 4 Water charity, buying water filters to distribute to impoverished families and villages she encounters on her travels, to ensure they can access clean drinking water.

She has a GoFundMe page also raising funds for the cause.

"When I decided to bikepack I knew I wanted to find a way to give back. Travelling the world you can start to feel guilty because the inequality is harsh," says Emily, who studied physics in New York after playing soccer for Melbourne Victory and winning a full sports scholarship.

"I'm an incredibly privileged person with a beautiful life and so I wanted to do something, and I thought water filters would be the perfect answer."

After leaving Australian shores in July 2024, Emily has travelled through Indonesia, Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam, so far distributing about 100 of the US-military approved



29-year-old Emily Hulbert from Rhyll is bikepacking the world as a more sustainable travel option; riding a bike solo across the four compass points of the globe, so far clocking up about 8500km.

filters, which anyone can use after a quick 10-minute lesson.

"I was at a Thai children's home that had 80 children and each of them would drink eight 300ml plastic water bottles per day in the jungle, where there is no rubbish collection.

"The amount of plastic waste

was huge and I gave them two water filters and they now fill up big pans of water rather than using the bottles."

On her travels through Lombok, Emily came across 20 families in a village who would burn plastic to boil water to ensure it was safe to drink.

After giving each family a filter, they no longer use or burn the plastic.

Emily says 100 per cent of donations go to buying the water filters, which are about 15cm long and are gravity-fed to be used on tanks or buckets, to remove bacteria, disease and mi-

croplastics.

The Sawyer filters each cost \$60, which she carries in the panniers of her bike. To find the need Emily contacts local non-government organisations or distributes as she sees the need along the way.

## What next?

Emily left Australia again this week, after working for the summer at Pino's to save money for the next leg of her trip: Laos, China, across to India, Nepal and Pakistan before heading through central Asia and the Stans, including Azerbaijan, possibly Iran, through Turkey to Europe and London by Christmas.

Then it's on to Africa, where the need for water filtration is particularly great, although she says not all countries have the same need. And beyond that is southern, central and north Americas.

Emily admits she has a fearless streak and doesn't shy away from sleeping on beaches in her tent, loving the freedom and slow travel of bikepacking.

"I'm trying to avoid flying because I think we need to focus more on sustainable tourism. It's important to be aware.

"I don't judge anyone taking flights. I flew to Bali and on to Singapore. But it's important to try to reduce greenhouse gas emissions as an individual, especially if there are other options to take."

Details: [www.gofundme.com/f/water-cycle](http://www.gofundme.com/f/water-cycle)

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The Phillip Island Aquatic Centre Fund report shows a total income of \$302,458 since 2000. Expenditure in that 24-year period was \$212,281, with a current balance of \$90,176. Several years ago PIACF released their own masterplan and study, showing a Cowes pool could be a profit-making facility with accommodation and a criterium cycle track.

# Pool finances released, ahead of renewed push

From page 1

On the community notice-board, Hayley questioned the use of funds and mooted – given the lack of certainty around a pool – the funds could be redistributed.

“The funds would have gathered a tidy amount of interest by now if it had been invested all this time,” Hayley wrote.

“If there’s no pool likely to happen surely the funds should be allocated to another community project.”

Susan, a resident of 43 years, said in the early 80s and 90s “so much money was raised by ordinary people so their children could have a local pool”.

Amie said most of the donations had been spent on “admin, feasibility studies and trips”.

Rob said there weren’t enough funds to build anything “and I doubt there will ever be a pool so the funds should be used on another project that benefits the community but voted on by the community”.

“Otherwise the balance will be zero before too long,” he wrote.

PIACF secretary Peter McMahon said financial reports had never been hidden and were always available on their website.

“Our books are open for anyone to inspect at any time,” he said.

“The community can see all the ups and downs over that time since incorporation.”

He said because PIACF was an incorporated body, there were strict government rules for how funds could be discharged and so it wasn’t “simple” redirecting the funds to another cause.

Peter – who has volunteered for PIACF for two decades and at one stage was working four hours a day on the issue – said before his time the committee also paid for the running costs of a car for a committee member (\$5000).

“At one stage a member was required to travel all around Victoria to find best practice community pools,” Peter said. “His costs were reimbursed.”

## Hope

Peter said PIACF members still believed an aquatic centre would be built on Phillip Island.

“With a new council, we hope to see the whole recreation plan proceed, we know all community sports need it, not in 10 to 20 years, but now,” he said.

“So if you feel you can help the cause then contact us and be a part of what we desperately need.”

In September 2023 Bass Coast Shire adopted the Phillip Island Recreation Reserve Master Plan, which recommended more than 35 projects prioritised in the short term (one to 10 years), medium (11 to 20 years) and long-term (21+ years), including a pool, football oval and a series of multipurpose courts.

In 2021 the shire paid about \$2.7 million to purchase land on the old carnival site, which will be combined with the adjoining Hilton Chadwick Reserve to the west to create the sports hub land.

Development of the sports hub was a major election issue at a candidates forum last year, while it has also been a hot topic during question time in council meetings, with a focus now on next year’s shire financial plan

as a means of fast tracking the proposed project.

## Long history

A community pool was first mooted for the Cowes recreation centre in the early 1980s, followed by the CYC on the Phillip Island Road, then behind the Cowes Cultural Centre and now the old carnival site, on the corner of Phillip Island and Ventnor roads.

A pool committee was formed in 1991, and in 1999 PIACF was created, with an event attended by Dawn Fraser, the pool patron, in 2000, raising \$23,000.

While the community has long lobbied for a 50m pool, a shire study in 2021 recommended Cowes have a “district level” 25 metre x eight lane competition pool, combined learn-to-swim and hydrotherapy area, and 24-hour gym, at a cost of \$45.7 million.

The study also recommended a \$41 million new pool for Wonthaggi: 25 metre x 10 lanes, with a larger gym, new spa and sauna.

Several years ago PIACF released their own masterplan and study, showing a Cowes pool could be a profit-making facility with accommodation and a criterium cycle track.

Peter said they had long fought an uphill battle.

“The reason we are in the position we are has been driven by our council not being interested in providing the facilities that are badly needed for the island.”

He said PIACF was a fund-raising body to help build a Phillip Island Aquatic Centre and funds would be used once council decides to build a pool.

Details: [www.piac.org.au/](http://www.piac.org.au/)



Last week Cowes Primary School students Emily, Gemma, Angus, Phoebe, Lucy, Isla, Henry and Summer were making the most of the great conditions and warm water. In early January heat pumps were installed in the pool, which will help to maintain optimal water temperatures.

# Things heat up at Cowes Primary pool

## SWIMMING

In news that is sure to warm the hearts (and bodies) of student and parents alike, Cowes Primary School has installed heat pumps in the school pool.

Principal Rodney McKenzie said the school has made a significant investment in its beloved pool, ensuring its functionality is maximised with the installation of the heat pumps.

This upgrade, the largest since the pool’s establishment, guarantees consistent water temperatures between 27 degrees and 29 degrees Celsius from November to April, overcoming the limitations of its traditional solar heating system.

Mr McKenzie said the heat pumps will greatly enhance the school’s intensive swimming programs during Terms 1 and 4, which play a critical role in teaching water safety and

swimming skills.

“Cooler weather, particularly in the early mornings or at the edges of the swimming season, has previously posed challenges to maintaining optimal water temperatures.

“With the new system, these challenges are a thing of the past,” he said.

As the only publicly accessible pool on Phillip Island during January, the Cowes Primary School Pool serves a vital asset for the community.

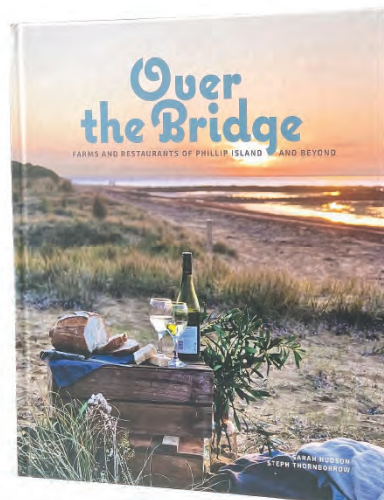
The improvements also benefit key users, including the Phillip Island Swim Club, YMCA and Vic Swim, who utilise the pool for their programs. These groups can now enjoy a consistent and comfortable water temperature for training and recreational activities.

The pool has been well utilised by community members throughout January.

# Great summer reading.

New Year special, \$80 for two books plus a free Advertiser online subscription (valued at \$70).

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# Happy Australians Day! Reflect. Respect. Celebrate.



From left, Daryl, Malcolm, Bonnie and Donald give Estelle a look at the renovated Woodleigh Hall. Estelle was the star of the show at the Australia Day event.

## Estelle steals the show at Woodleigh

### AUSTRALIA DAY

Is Woodleigh the smallest town to host Australia Day celebrations?

With just a Public Hall and a couple of houses, the little hamlet hosted 100 people for an Australia Day breakfast and associated activities.

Stud Jersey cow Estelle stole the show. She was patted, photographed and hand milked ... "until the cows came home".

Many in the rural commu-

nity, and visitors, had never had the challenge of squeezing milk from a cow's udder.

Long time residents Will Hunter and Blanche Chambers had the crowd enthralled, and they revelled in the opportunity to relate stories of growing up on a dairy farm.

Other activities included gumboot throwing, archery, and hayrides behind farmer Ron's vintage Grey Fergy tractor.

The event was organised by the Woodleigh Hall committee.

## New citizens welcomed

At a special ceremony on Australia Day in Wonthaggi, 24 new citizens were welcomed to Australia.

The new Australians came from Nepal, United Kingdom, Italy, Philippines, New Zealand, Myanmar, Republic of Ireland, Mauritius and India.

Bass Coast Mayor Cr Rochelle Halstead officiated at

the ceremony, with Deputy Mayor Cr Brett Tessari presenting certificates and hampers to each new citizen.

Melina Bath MP also attended and addressed the new citizens and their friends and family.

The next Citizenship Ceremony will be on May 22 at 3.30pm at the Wonthaggi Workmen's Club.



Jim and Sandy Innes from Rhyll in front of their beloved classic car, part of the display by the Classic Car Club at the event.



The Gathering of Neighbours event in Rhyll was a resounding success, with over 1000 attending on Australia Day.



Bob Pascoe from Rhyll getting into the spirit of the day. More photos at pisra.com.au

## Neighbours gather to celebrate

### AUSTRALIA DAY

The Gathering of Neighbours event at Rhyll on January 26 was a resounding success, with over 1000 people enjoying an afternoon filled with music, laughter, and community spirit.

Families, friends, and visitors gathered at Rhyll Park to soak up the sunshine and celebrate the wonderful place they call home.

The event was proudly hosted by the Phillip Island and District Historical Society in partnership with the Rotary Club of Phillip Island and San Remo. Together, they created an inviting atmosphere that encouraged locals and visitors alike to relax, connect, and appreciate the rich heritage of the island.

The Rotary Club's complimentary sausage sizzle proved so popular that extra supplies had to be purchased after selling out within the first two hours.

The unmistakable aroma of sizzling sausages and onions filled the air, drawing in hungry crowds eager to enjoy the classic

Aussie treat.

Entertainment was in no short supply, with two live bands keeping the music flowing throughout the afternoon. Many locals simply relaxed in the sunshine, enjoying the tunes and the stunning surroundings of the Rhyll Park.

Meanwhile, children were captivated by a towering stilt-walker who dazzled both young and old with his impressive skills. Jules, the face painter extraordinaire, was also a major hit, with a steady line of eager children waiting to be transformed into their favourite characters.

The event wasn't just about music and entertainment.

Classic car enthusiasts from the Classic Car Club proudly showcased their prized vehicles, drawing plenty of admiration from attendees. Adults found their own oasis at 'Bill's Bar', which proved to be a popular spot for catching up with friends and neighbours while enjoying a refreshing drink.

Gea Lovell, President of the Rotary Club of Phillip Island and

San Remo, reflected on the success of the day.

"This is an event where locals and visitors can come and relax, enjoying the magnificent place we call home. It's everything we hoped for and more."

The Gathering of Neighbours event was supported by a grant from the National Australia Day Council, whose generous assistance helped bring the community together for this much-loved day of connection and celebration.

The Phillip Island and District Historical Society, deeply committed to preserving and sharing the island's history, was thrilled to see such a positive and respectful response from the community.

Secretary Pamela Rothfield shared her thoughts.

"We are so delighted that this event has clearly cemented itself as a cherished tradition, bringing together the community to respectfully reflect on our shared past and celebrate what makes Rhyll and Phillip Island so special."

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Holiday Lifestyle Cowes is designed to meet the needs of diverse buyers. Whether you're downsizing, investing, or creating a family retreat, our homes offer something for everyone.

build, as well as a 6.5 per cent annual net return on completed homes for up to 10 years.

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CONTACT MICHAEL MCLEOD 0412 712 034



57 ELVINGTON AVENUE, COWES  
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This property combines coastal charm with contemporary convenience- all just minutes from Everything Cowes has to offer. Set on a low maintenance block in a quiet neighborhood featuring 4 bedrooms all with robes, 2 bathrooms, and dual living zones.

CONTACT MICHAEL MCLEOD 0412 712 034



18 KENWYN COURT, COWES  
\$845,000 TO \$899,000

When land and house size matter, this very large home sits in a quiet court with excellent beach access. The north facing balcony flows to the upstairs second living area and kitchen. The large block is perfect if you want to build a large shed in the rear of the block.

CONTACT MICHAEL MCLEOD 0412 712 034



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# New public art for Berninnet

**ART**

Bass Coast Shire Council has announced Yorta Yorta, Wamba Wamba, Mutti Mutti, and Boon Wurrung multi-disciplinary artist and curator, Maree Clarke, as the chosen artist for the Berninnet Public Art Commission.

Chosen through a competitive Expression of Interest process held from August to September 2024, Maree's selection was confirmed following onsite interviews at Berninnet.

The council said Maree was selected for her emphasis on community participation through a series of workshops, celebrating the unique local character and history by sharing traditional Aboriginal ways of travelling and living on the island.

Her vision for the commission centres around a stunning Murrini glass canoe, formed from glass sections created during public workshops at Berninnet, where the community will have the opportunity to contribute to crafting and arranging glass sections.

The canoe references the long connection to the waterways, and travel. The Murrini glass at once captures the microscopic elements of the river reed, the play of light and colour reflects the sparkle of the local wetlands and ocean that surrounds Phillip Island.

Mayor of Bass Coast, Cr Rochelle Halstead, encourages everyone to get involved and share in the creativity.

"This is your chance to work with the extraordinary First Nations artist Maree Clarke and leave your mark on a piece that will inspire generations to come," the Mayor said.

"Imagine future generations looking up at this breathtaking glass canoe suspended in Berninnet's Grand Hall, representing our community's creativity



First Nations artist Maree Clarke has been commissioned to create a public artwork for Berninnet, based on a concept of a Murrini glass canoe, which will be hung in the Grand Hall. There will be a series of public workshops from this Friday to Sunday, to help create the glass sections.

and collaboration.

"I can't wait to see how the light dances through the glass, telling stories of First Nations culture while celebrating the pride we all share in this special place."

**Create Together**

Community involvement is at the heart of this project, council stated.

Maree will host "Yawa (Long Journey)", a hands-on workshop at Berninnet from Friday January 31 to Sunday February 2.

Community members are encouraged to drop-in on any day and join for as little or as long as they like.

During these workshops, community members will have the unique opportunity to contribute to the artwork by arranging Murrini glass sections.

This hands-on experience allows participants to learn about the artistry of glassmaking, traditional practices, and the stories that shape Maree's work.

This is a unique opportunity to work alongside one of Australia's leading Aboriginal artists while learning about traditional practices and the stories that inspire them.

Each workshop station accommodates three participants at a time, fostering an intimate and hands-on experience, the council stated.

Berninnet, meaning "Gather Together" in the Bunurong language, is an award-winning building in Cowes and the Berninnet Public Art Commission aligns perfectly with the building's purpose, encouraging connection, cultural exchange, and a sense of belonging.

Maree's Murrini glass canoe will embody these values by situating the artwork in the context of the architecture of Berninnet, council said.

For more information and to RSVP, visit [www.basscoast.vic.gov.au/yawa-longjourney](http://www.basscoast.vic.gov.au/yawa-longjourney)



Robyn Howarth, author of *Faraday: A Community Rediscovered*, will be at Phillip Island Library (Berninnet) on February 6, 2pm - 3pm, a must for fans of local history and true crime.

## "Crime of the century": Author talk at Berninnet

**LIBRARY**

Myli Libraries is hosting a session with Robyn Howarth, author of *Faraday: A Community Rediscovered*.

On Thursday February 6, Robyn, who grew up in Faraday, will share her deeply personal account of the events that shocked her community in 1972.

On October 6 of that year, Faraday became the site of a traumatic crime when two armed men kidnapped children and their teacher from the local school.

Known as the "crime of the century", the event left an indelible mark on the town. In

her book, Robyn reflects on the emotional toll, childhood trauma, and the impact of the media frenzy that followed.

This is a not to be missed session, particularly those interested in local history, true crime, and personal accounts of resilience.

Robyn will also be available to sign and sell copies of her book at the event.

Phillip Island Library (Berninnet), Thursday February 6, 2pm - 3pm

For details about the event, contact the Phillip Island Library 03 5952 2842 or visit [www.myli.org.au/](http://www.myli.org.au/)

For more information about Robyn: [robynhowarth.com.au/](http://robynhowarth.com.au/)

# Churchill Island presents Summer Sessions

**MUSIC**

The family-friendly Summer Sessions are back in February featuring local acts performing on the picturesque Roger's Lawn within the farm precinct on Churchill Island.

The music-lovers concert series promises an afternoon of cool tunes against a breathtaking oceanic backdrop as the perfect ending to the weekend.

Explore the grounds, bring a picnic rug and enjoy delicious food and refreshments available at the Farm-

house Kitchen.

Laze away on the lawn while you soak up the summer ambience, panoramic views and a fantastic line up of local performers for your entertainment.

**Sunday February 9**

12pm - 1pm: Imogen Price

1.30pm - 2.30pm: Maddy May

3pm - 5.15pm: The Times Duo

**Sunday February 23**

12pm - 1pm: Daisy Spratt

1.30pm - 2.30pm: Maddy May

3pm - 5.15pm: Dan Lunn

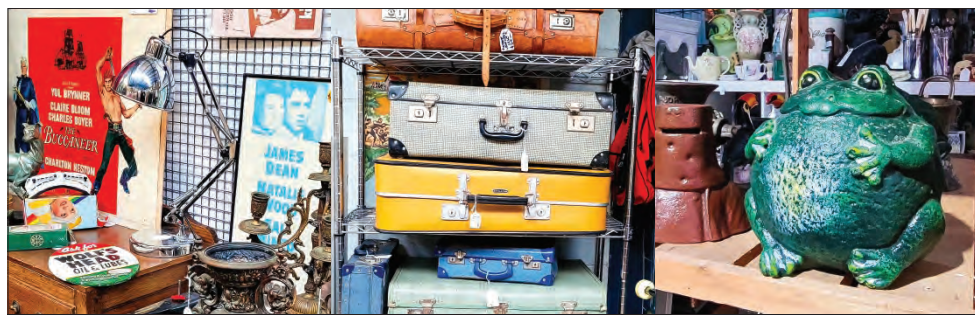
This event is open to all ages. By purchasing a general admission ticket to Churchill Island, you will gain access to this event, as well as the farm, historical buildings and garden.

Please note Local Passes cannot be renewed on the day of your visit. For Local Pass renewals, kindly visit the friendly team on-site prior to your visit.

For more information and to book tickets, visit [www.penguins.org.au/whats-on/](http://www.penguins.org.au/whats-on/)



Summer Sessions return to the lawns of Churchill Island during February, featuring an array of local musicians.



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# Get set for the Cowes Classic

**EVENT**

The Cowes Classic returns to the foreshore of Cowes on Saturday, February 8 with the 32nd event set to be one of the biggest in its history.

Following on from record registrations in the first leg of the Bass Coast Series (Cape Aquathon), organisers say strong registrations indicate a similarly high level of interest from competitors.

Simon Manning from the organising committee said the strong numbers at Cape Paterson bode well for the Cowes event.

“Last year we had over 400 participants and based on the registrations so far, we look like exceeding that.”

The Cowes Classic, which starts at 2pm, is the second stage of the Bass Coast Series.

Once again, the popular Over 60 categories will also be offered at Cowes.

Simon said they also expected more teams to register for this year’s event.

Teams feature a swimmer and a runner and the category is growing in popularity each year.

“Registering as a team gives a lot more people the chance to compete, as some swimmers don’t want to do the run, and vice versa,” Simon explained.

There are team categories for male, female and mixed, with prizes for the different categories.

All competitors need to register online by 5pm on Friday February 7. There are no on-day registrations.



This year’s Cowes Classic runs at 2pm on February 8, with record numbers expected to compete. The Little Penguin Dash starts at 10am on the same day. At last year’s Cowes Classic, members of Phillip Islands Turtle Smugglers also competed.

As part of the day’s event, the Little Penguin Dash, for competitors aged 7 to 14 will run at 10am.

**Classic**

A joint fundraiser for the Phillip Island Football Netball Club and Woolamai Beach Surf Life Saving Club (WBSLSC) means there will be plenty of members of both clubs in and around the water.

Lifesaving crews from WBSLSC will be on the water to ensure all the swimmers are safe, while members of the footy club will be marshalling both events.

“There will be a race briefing at 1.45pm in the Jetty Triangle,

and this year, competitors will be swimming west to east, from Mussel Rocks to Erehwon Point,” said Simon.

“We really encourage everyone to come down and support the competitors.”

Road closures will be in place for the duration of the race, and this year, vehicles travelling down Thompson Avenue, won’t be able to turn right at Chapel Street. To avoid traffic delays, it’s recommended that drivers avoid the area during the race time.

The Cowes Classic starts at 2pm and consists of a 500-metre swim and four-kilometre run.

The race centre is upstairs at the North Pier and opens at 11am.

Registrations close at 5pm on Friday, at [www.basscoastseries.com.au/cowes-classic](http://www.basscoastseries.com.au/cowes-classic)

Presentations will start at 4pm at North Pier.

**Penguin Dash**

Much like its older sibling, the Little Penguin Dash is growing in popularity, with a record number of entries also predicted this year.

“We may set another record for the Little Penguin Dash, as it is definitely ahead of where it was last year in terms of registrations,” said Simon.

“Each year, we set a new benchmark with the event.”

This is the sixth year the Little Penguin Dash has run, and organisers say there are now competitors in the Cowes Classic who started in the junior event.

Simon said the event is a way to introduce youngsters to the competition.

“It gets them in the mind set and gives them something to aim for and train for,” he said.

“It’s about getting them to feel comfortable in the water and having a bit of fun. And they all love getting their medallions and t-shirts.”

The Little Penguin Dash consists of a 150 – 300 metre swim and a 500 metre – one kilometre run (dependent on age).

The event starts at 10am. The race centre upstairs at the North Pier opens at 9am.

Register online at: [www.basscoastseries.com.au/little-penguin-dash](http://www.basscoastseries.com.au/little-penguin-dash).

Registrations close at 5pm on Friday February 7.

Major sponsors for this year’s event include Bass Coast Shire Council, Phillip Island Nature Parks, Bendigo Bank, Westernport Water and North Pier Hotel.

All proceeds support the surf life saving and football netball clubs.

The final leg of the Bass Coast Series is the San Remo Channel Challenge, on March 1.

A total of \$4000 in prize money for the series winners has been provided by Bass Coast Shire Council.

/Sponsored article/

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- 01/02 FLUX 17. FEATURING GABRIEL MORAES - 9PM \$25+BF
- 02/02 TERESA DIXON - 5PM
- 07/02 MARK HOWARD - 8PM
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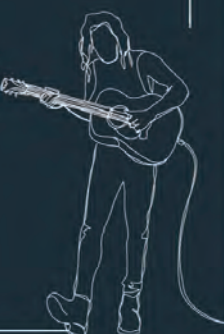
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# Little Penguin Dash

10.00am Sat. Feb 8

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This year's Edible Gardens weekend is on February 8 and 9 and features 16 fabulous gardens across Bass Coast, including four on Phillip Island.

## How many different ways can you grow your own food?

### GARDENING

At this year's Bass Coast Edible Gardens Weekend, visitors can view any number of gardening techniques, such as Permaculture, Indigenous (bush tucker) plantings, wicking beds, espaliering, planting by the moon, growing foods in pots and more.

The rich diversity of gardens and gardening are once again on display on the weekend of February 8 and 9.

"We are very pleased to present 16 fabulous gardens this year, spread across Bass Coast", said Sharon Willcox, the Gardens Co-ordinator.

There are three community gardens, including Phillip Island's own new PICAL garden, and 13 private gardens of all shapes and sizes, on the island and the mainland.

"The four gardens on the island are a great example of the diversity we work

hard to achieve," said Sharon.

"They include small space gardening, a Bush Tucker garden, growing on acreage and manageable gardening on a bush block."

Visit the website to get a sneak peek at each garden and then buy your ticket online at [www.bascoastediblegardens.com](http://www.bascoastediblegardens.com).

Maddy Harford, the other Joint Co-ordinator said they were committed to keeping the weekend affordable and have kept tickets at the same price for the third year in a row: \$25 for all gardens all weekend or \$5 for individual gardens.

"You can buy tickets online or at the garden gates (cash)."

Bass Coast Edible Gardens is a major fundraiser for Bass Coast Adult Learning (BCAL), which delivers a range of horticulture programs, among many other courses.

/ Sponsored article /

# Bush Dance returns

### ENTERTAINMENT

The successful Bush Dance returns to Churchill Island on February 22, presented by the Friends of Churchill Island (FOCIS).

After the enthusiastic response to the 2023 dance, FOCIS is presenting the Bush Dance in the Shearing Shed at Churchill Island between 3.30pm and 6.30pm.

Popular bush band Blackberry Jam are providing music for the afternoon.

FOCIS members and Phillip Island Nature Park ticket holders can enter Churchill Island at any time of the day. Bush Dance ticket holders can enter from 3pm.

Advance bookings close on February 21. If tickets are not sold out beforehand, they may be purchased on the day from 3pm.



The successful Bush Dance returns to Churchill Island on February 22, presented by the Friends of Churchill Island.

Tickets remain at the same affordable price as the 2023 event.

Adult (16 years and over) \$35. Concession (pensioners, seniors, full-time students, apprentices) \$28.

Family tickets are also available: \$45 (one adult plus children 15 years and under) or \$80 (two adults plus children 15 years and

under).

It's recommended to arrive before normal island visiting finishes at 4pm.

Please note that this is an alcohol-free event. Other refreshments may be purchased at the café before 4pm or bring your own.

Bookings can be made at [focis.org.au/bushdance2025](http://focis.org.au/bushdance2025) or use the QR code.

## Book sales boom at Bill's Shed

### COMMUNITY

It was another very successful year for Bill's Book Shed in Cowes.

The popular book sale raised \$12,350 with proceeds funding equipment needed for Melaleuca Aged Care.

The Melaleuca Auxil-

iary was open every day over January from 10am until 1pm, staffed by dedicated volunteers.

Since the start of the book sales in 1992, up to and including this year, \$569,318 has been raised.

The Auxiliary would like to thank the community for their continued

support.

Bill's Book Shed does accept donations of books, which must be in clean and saleable condition. If you're unsure of the books you'd like to donate, please contact the book shed.

Bill's Book Shed is located at 1 Watchorn Road, Cowes. Phone: 0437 949 029.

Bass Coast Adult Learning (BCAL) presents  
**Bass Coast Edible Gardens Weekend**

Saturday 8 and Sunday 9 February 2025  
10am to 4pm each day



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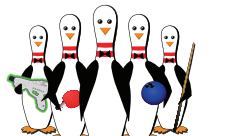
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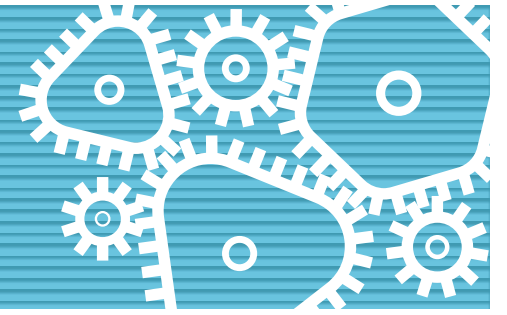
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PHILLIP ISLAND & SAN REMO **ADVERTISER**

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NEWS



The Textile Art Group, a section of ASPIR (Arts Society of Phillip Island Region) held its first Gala Exhibition at the new Creative Arts Station on January 18 and 19.

# Textiles celebrated at exhibition

ARTS

The Textile Art Group, a section of ASPIR (Arts Society of Phillip Island Region) held its first Gala Exhibition at the new Creative Arts Station on January 18 and 19.

The group said the show was a resounding success.

The art on display showcased weaving, felting, sewing, embroidery, spinning, lino cut, string making, and fabric basketry, with many items available to purchase.

Exhibiting at the event were group members Margaret Knight, Barbara Owen, Norma Stack, Jillian Ronald, Teresa Bennett, Annie Taylor, Shirley Collins, Chris Schache and Deb Wearne.

They also held live demonstrations across the weekend of many of the



ASPIR Textile group member Margaret Knight demonstrates making string with corn husks at the Gala Exhibition at the new Creative Arts Station in January.

techniques used to create the items at the exhibition.

The group meets twice a month to work on group projects, individual works and participate in workshops.

At the meetings, they

also prepare work for the annual Easter ASPIR Art Show, which includes a textiles section.

Anyone interested in joining the group, please ring Shirley on 0410 584 025 or Deb 0402 802 465.

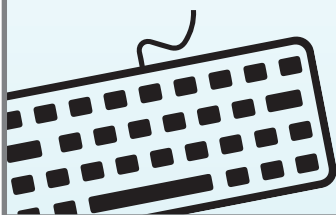


From left: Sue Lynton, Jillian Ronald and Juliette Rennie, who joined the ASPIR Textile group that day.

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PHILLIP ISLAND & SAN REMO **ADVERTISER**



# Island steel welcomes new owners

## BUSINESS

There's been a changing of the guard at Island Steel with the New Year welcoming new owners Nick and Jessie Bone.

Nick and Jessie have taken over from Carron and Mary Bourke who have operated this Cowes based business for the past 27 years.

In that time, Island Steel has seen a number of changes and developments in its location, size and productivity. When Carron, Mary and their four young children arrived on the island in July 1998, this local business occupied a small factory in Dunsmore Road and employed one skilled tradesman, a boilermaker, to undertake all its fabrication work.

In order to keep up with demand and to cater for future needs, Island Steel moved in 2007 to a much larger premises in the industrial area of The Concourse, Cowes.

This increased floorspace, and the further employment of two extra tradesmen and an office manager, has enabled Island Steel to provide for the rapid growth of the island in terms of structural development.

Being the only steel fabricator in the area, Island Steel works closely with many of the local tradesmen and businesses, with much of its projects involved in the housing industry.

"We supply structural steel for residential housing and for light industrial construction, much of which is in the local area," said Carron.

"The fact that we have our own truck and crane enables us to undertake a lot of



It's a family affair at Island Steel in Cowes with new owners (from left) Nick and Jessie Bone and their three young children Angus (15 months), Poppie (7) and Ella (5), being welcomed to the business by Mary and Carron Bourke. Poppie and Ella have added excitement in starting their new school year at Cowes Primary in Grades 2 and Prep respectively.

the erection of the steel as well. The current trend to bigger houses has seen an increased demand for the supply of steel," he added.

In handing over the keys, Carron is confident that this family-owned business will continue to provide quality workmanship and customer service.

"Nick will be a breath of fresh air in his enthusiasm (for the work) and the opportunity it provides him in buying the business," Carron said.

Nick and Jessie see this as an opportunity to fulfil a lifetime ambition of owning their own business and to establish themselves into a welcoming community.

"We're excited to be here and look forward to building a future (on the island) for our young family, and to establish ourselves in business," they said.

"In the short time we've been here we've been able to settle in easily thanks to the friendliness of those we've met."

Nick comes well qualified for the job both as a skilled boilermaker, and for the past 13 years as a project manager with a similar but larger steel fabrication company in the northern suburbs of Melbourne.

In the short time he's been at the helm, Nick has found the change challenging but good in the assistance he's receiving from those around him; and in meeting some of the local tradesmen and clients.

Being a country boy at heart, coming from Nhill in north west Victoria, Nick and his family are keen to become involved in island life and to once again become an integral part of a local community.

"This is something we've been craving for a long time," they said.

Although there is a change of ownership, it's business as usual at Island Steel with no change to the staff which sees Des and Rob in the workshop and Lyn as office manager. The only exception is valued and long-term employee, Mal Storey, who has decided to down tools after 20 years of loyal service with the business.

Island Steel is located at 14-16 The Concourse, Cowes. The office is open Monday to Friday from 8am - 4pm. All steel enquiries can be made to the office on 03 5952 1432 or to Nick on 0418 328 408.

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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



### Weekend traffic woes

Friday the start of the Australia Day long weekend, at 4.28pm the traffic onto the San Remo Bridge and the island was crawling; by 4.51pm it was stationary.

Saturday on the way home from Golf (Lang Lang) I got to the split at 1.16pm, seven kms from home, it took 42 minutes.

In last week's Advertiser, an article asked: "Are we killing Phillip Island's appeal?"

Yes, I agree with the three community groups.

To answer this problem and at the age of 76, I cannot see it done in my time, but the four lanes have to be extended the eight kms to the bridge and the bridge extended to at least three lanes.

Michael Quinn, San Remo

### Dog park needed

As our permanent population on the Island continues to grow with both retirees and also with young families and couples

escaping the city and increasing crime, our dog population continues to grow along with humans. We have approximately 14,000 permanents, 60,000-plus people over Christmas, large numbers for school holidays, long weekends, motorsport events etc. This is only going to increase over time. For so long individuals have constantly tried to have council develop some reasonable dog parks on the island. Nature Parks don't wish dogs to even have access to the beaches hence we have one small piece of off-lead beach at Ventnor. It has been packed there over summer. We have 97km of coastline around the island. How hard is it to provide two generous off lead beaches at opposite ends of the island?

The other ask is for a proper (real) dog park or two. This is a low cost ask. Two fenced areas for large active dogs and a smaller for puppies and elderly or timid dogs. There are hundreds of parks around Australia which are first rate but

here at the island with such an expanding population we have nothing!

I'm getting sick of the council avoiding this issue and not delivering what they promise. Dogs provide companionship, physical and mental health support, exercise benefits. I'm sick of hearing a handful of negative people condemning dogs and people who may not have a lead on their dog. Let's find a solution for the problem and not a problem with the solution.

Vanna Watters, Cowes

*Editor's note: There are currently three off-lead beaches on Phillip Island. As well as the beach at Ventnor, which is off leash at all times, there is an off-leash section at Cape Woolamai Beach and one at Cowes West Beach, although seasonal restrictions apply on these two areas. Blue Gum Reserve in Cowes is a designated off-leash area.*

### Thank you public health

On December 10 I suddenly felt excruciating pain in my rib cage. I was taken to the Health Hub, and then transferred to Wonthaggi.

I was nervous since deciding this year that private health insurance is no longer affordable for me. The whole experience was a great relief; good facilities, good

people and good service.

The next day a CT scan then MRI to confirm symptoms of gall stones, and a transfer to Frankston hospital for surgery was organised.

Thank you very much to members of Peninsula Health. Everybody was quietly confident and competent, no need to ask for any reassurance, self-evident at every stage. While I was there, I was encouraged to fill out forms for a gall bladder removal. I received mail from Peninsula Health to advise entry into their system but, as a public patient, I may need to wait as long as six months.

Last week, my phone rang to say Frankston Hospital had a last minute cancellation, so that, presuming it was possible for me to check in there at 7am the next morning, surgery could be done immediately.

As previously, everything went smoothly; all staff were totally organised. Am now totally reassured but disappointed that I didn't recognise previously that private health insurance is a hangover from antics of the Howard/Costello government. Subsidies to private are now reported to be more than cost of public health. Surely this needs fixing?

Bernie McComb, Cowes

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# Sharks feast at the Cobra dome

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Returning to their preferred two-day format, with a team resembling a big brother program of junior and senior players, the Sharks ventured into the hills of Korumburra to get their season back on track after a couple of narrow losses.

Winning the toss and batting on an extremely flat wicket and fast outfield, the Island boys knew they had to post a big score.

With a few key personnel out, opportunities were plentiful with Womersly and Epifano opening the batting for the Island. As is the nature of opening the batting, sometimes you just get a good one.

Unfortunately, Womersly was on the receiving end of mother cricket's cruel wrath and was bowled in the third over.

Johnston joined Epifano and the two

conservatively aimed to build the innings, knowing with the state of the outfield that runs could be made up later in the innings.

Korumburra were bowling tight lines and lengths but were unable to stop the boundaries with the Island getting to drinks 1-60.

After the drinks break and both batsmen feeling more confident with the pitch, they began to increase their tempo and score more freely.

Korumburra struck minutes before break, with Johnston hauling out to mid-off for 37, breaking a 115-run partnership with Epifano.

Captain Mock joined Epifano after the break with one aim in mind, to guide cult figure 'Connie' to his maiden A1 century.

Epifano chose the path less taken by chancing his way through the 80s and 90s before a misfield provided Epifano with his moment of glory, bringing up his 100 with one of 17 boundaries for the day.

The big left hander played a brilliant knock of controlled aggression and solid defence before he decided 100 was a nice round number, running himself out shortly after bringing up the milestone.

Epifano received an eruption of applause by his teammates and family as he left the field, putting the Sharks in a commanding position of 3-186 off 47 overs.

Rooster Niven joined Mock and continued to put pressure on the Cobra's bowling, with measured shot selection and hard running between the wickets

Spoken before the game, the Island knew with wickets in hand, they could pile on the runs late in the innings and that's exactly what they did.

Mock took control of the game with Niven as a worthy sidekick, upped the tempo and the scoring rate.

The very public bromance between these two batsmen flourished to a gigantic 150-run partnership to take the

Sharks' total past the par mark of 300.

Mock decided to put the three-wood away and bring the driver out for the last seven overs, clearing the fence and punishing the Cobra's weary attack.

Phillip Island's supreme leader proved why he is the league's superior batsmen, bringing up his third century for the season.

No sooner had his teammates sat down after applauding his century, they were up out of their chair applauding his 150.

Mock fell in the last over for 151 which left Niven to see out the innings with Royal as a companion.

The boys finished with a flurry and the Island concluded their innings with an impressive 4-346 and Niven remaining unbeaten on 43.

Although large in isolation, the Island will have to be on their game next week to defend this total, with a lightning-fast outfield and a flat wicket projected.

**PHILLIP ISLAND**  
**4/346**  
D. MOCK 151  
C. EPIFANO 100  
TOM NIVEN 43\*  
B. JOHNSTON 37  
**A1 GRADE**  
PHILLIP ISLAND & DISTRICT CRICKET CLUB  
V  
KORUMBURRA  
SAT 25TH JAN  
KORUMBURRA RESERVE  
**IGA**  
SAN REMO

**PHILLIP ISLAND**  
**89**  
A. WILLIAMS 3/9/8  
K. LANE 2/25/29  
T. ALLAN 2/25/12  
H. ARCEO 2/17/8.1  
**B1 GRADE**  
PHILLIP ISLAND & DISTRICT CRICKET CLUB  
V  
KORUMBURRA  
SAT 25TH JAN  
COWES RESERVE  
**Bowens**  
THE BUILDERS CHOICE

**PHILLIP ISLAND**  
**4/196**  
J. TRAN 48  
A. WILLIAMS 43\*  
H. WOMERSLEY 33  
G. MCCAYUSALAND 26\*  
KORUMBURRA  
**U17'S**  
DEF  
KORUMBURRA  
SAT 25TH JAN  
KORUMBURRA RESERVE  
**Haymes**  
THE GREAT AUSTRALIAN PAINT

**PHILLIP ISLAND**  
**5/112**  
R. HUGHES 13  
J. MARSHALL 11\*  
C. CHAMBERS 11  
**U15'S**  
DEF BY  
GLEN ALVIE  
GLEN ALVIE  
SAT 25TH JAN  
COWES RESERVE  
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## Monday scorcher kept beaches busy

**SURF LIFESAVING**

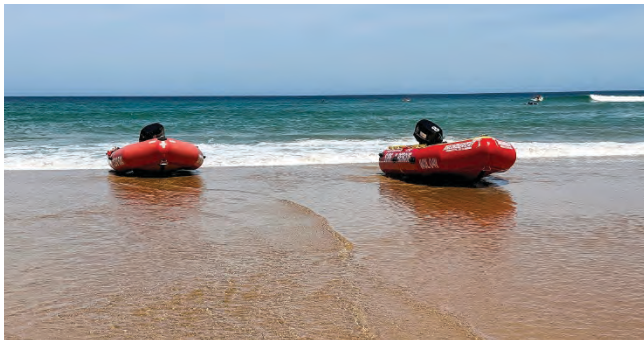
According to Woolamai Beach Surf Life Saving Club President, Jason Close, it was busy at Woolamai Beach with a lot of visitors to the beach over the long weekend.

With temperatures soaring to 38 degrees on Monday, people flocked to local beaches.

"There were over 800 preventative actions across the weekend as life savers worked hard to keep swimmers between the flags, a task made difficult by the strong swell and side currents," said Jason.

Lifesavers also travelled along the beach between Woolamai Beach, Magiclands and Anzacs to encourage swimmers to safer locations and to the patrolled area.

"Lifesavers were assisted over the weekend by the efforts of Victoria Police's Wonthaggi Proactive Policing Unit who visited numerous Phillip Island beaches and engaged with people on the beach, talked about safety and how to identify rips and other haz-



Lifesavers also travelled along the beach between Woolamai Beach, Magiclands and Anzacs to encourage swimmers to safer locations and to the patrolled area, over the busy long weekend.

ards," Jason said.

"This summer has seen strong efforts by state and local authorities to carry out community education, increase signage and public messaging to help guide visitors to safe locations.

"This in turn greatly assists us in our role of keeping beachgoers safe."

There was only one rescue at Woolamai Beach over the weekend. There were no rescues at Smiths Beach, but Life Saving Victoria said there were six jet ski rescues across Bass Coast.

Woolamai, Smiths and Cowes beaches are all pa-

trolled seven days a week from 10am until 6pm until February 2.

Before heading to the beach, download the Beachsafe app.

The app provides detailed information from patrol status, facilities and hazards to weather, swell and tide. One of the biggest hazards on island beaches are rips, which can be hard to spot for those unfamiliar with conditions, and can be deadly.

Beachsafe has clear information and videos on how to spot a rip.

[www.woolamaibeach.org.au](http://www.woolamaibeach.org.au)



Congratulations to last week's winners (from left): Elias (Lou) Capsalis (L), Craig Brown (S), Gwen Jeffrey (2) and Max Summers (3).

## Midweek at Corinella

**BOWLS**

It was another beautiful day for 48 midweek players last week, who headed out to Corinella for their regular challenge.

Competitors were met by Pauline and John while Peter did the heavy lifting and arranged teams.

The weather stayed true to form during the morning session and bowlers took advantage of this with some great competition around the green which continued into the afternoon. Congratulations to

winners on 38 points: Elias (Lou) Capsalis (L), Craig Brown (S), Gwen Jeffrey (2) and Max Summers (3).

Runners up on 35 points: Rob Paganoni (S), Allan Weeden (L), Phil Wright (3) and Frank d'Unienville (2).

Best one game winners on 19 points: Jenny Smith (L)(Inset), Dennis Tomlin (2), Michael Dady (S) and Jaye Allen-Dayle (3).

The club gives a shoutout to volunteers Peter, Pauline and John for their hard work, along with Terry behind the bar, Gwen and the girls in the kitchen plus Phil and Arch.

This week, the club will meet at San Remo.

# TIDE GUIDE

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

WED 29 JAN	THU 30 JAN	FRI 31 JAN	SAT 1 FEB	SUN 2 FEB	MON 3 FEB	TUE 4 FEB
HIGH 1:12 am 2.62 m	HIGH 2:15 am 2.73 m	HIGH 3:09 am 2.84 m	HIGH 3:57 am 2.93 m	HIGH 4:40 am 2.98 m	HIGH 5:19 am 2.99 m	HIGH 5:56 am 2.98 m
LOW 6:36 am 1.50 m	LOW 7:45 am 1.38 m	LOW 8:45 am 1.21 m	LOW 9:36 am 1.01 m	LOW 10:22 am 0.80 m	LOW 11:06 am 0.59 m	LOW 11:48 am 0.42 m
HIGH 12:24 pm 2.26 m	HIGH 1:42 pm 2.34 m	HIGH 2:50 pm 2.46 m	HIGH 3:50 pm 2.61 m	HIGH 4:45 pm 2.74 m	HIGH 5:38 pm 2.85 m	HIGH 6:29 pm 2.91 m
LOW 6:38 pm 0.66 m	LOW 7:44 pm 0.59 m	LOW 8:42 pm 0.53 m	LOW 9:35 pm 0.50 m	LOW 10:26 pm 0.52 m	LOW 11:15 pm 0.57 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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Former Commodore Tim Modra has sponsored the race through Modra Technology, with participants competing for a share of the \$10,000 prize pool.



The 29th annual Cowes Yacht Club endurance race, returns on February 15, with spectators encouraged to come to the club to watch the race start.



Key event partner and major sponsor Australian Air Safaris. Owner Tony Kirkhope is a long-time visitor to Cowes and his family were founding members of the Cowes Yacht Club.

# Phillip Island's toughest challenge returns

## SAILING

The 29th annual Cowes Yacht Club endurance race, one of Australia's most challenging off-the-beach sailing events, is set to return on February 15.

This iconic competition promises to attract over 50 of the nation's top sailors, with participants traveling from across the country to compete for a share of the \$10,000 prize pool, generously sponsored by key event partners and major sponsor Australian Air Safaris.

While this marks the race's 29th year, it's only the fourth time the large prize money has been offered.

The idea for this enhanced version of the event came from Tony Kirkhope, owner of Australian Air Safaris and long-time Cowes visitor. Tony's family were founding members of the Cowes Yacht Club, and his vision has helped transform the race into a premier event for competitive sailors.

"This great catamaran race has grown tremendously over the past three years," said Tony.

"Australian Air Safaris is proud to support it again this year and elevate its status as the must-win race for Australia's best catamaran sailors."

Cowes Yacht Club Commodore Andrew Jan-

son, a veteran competitor with over 20 years of experience in the race, expressed his pride in the event's evolution.

"Our committee works tirelessly year-round to plan this race, from securing entries to ensuring it's safe and enjoyable for the Cowes community.

"It's the dedication of our club members and the support from sponsors like Red Rocks Golf Course, Modra Technology, Isle of Wight Hotel, Westernport Water, Bendigo Bank, Bass Coast Shire Council, Wildlife Coast Cruises, and Ocean Reach Brewery that make it all possible," said Andrew.

Andrew also credited

Tony Kirkhope as the race's "godfather" and praised former Commodore Tim Modra and his wife Jeni for their generous sponsorship through Modra Technology, which has further elevated the race's prestige.

"Being part of this incredible event is an honour. It's hard to describe just how gruelling the race is for competitors," said Tim from Modra Technology.

## About the race

The race begins and ends at Cowes Yacht Club, located 400 meters west of the pier. Competitors navigate a course around French Island in Westernport Bay.

While the shortest route is approximately 70 km, most sailors travel over 100 km as they navigate the challenging conditions. Previous race times have ranged from over eight hours to the record of two hours and 45 minutes.

The Australian Air Safaris National Around French Island Catamaran Challenge will take place on February 15, with entries capped at 70 competitors.

## Community involvement

The Phillip Island community has embraced the event with enthusiasm.

In 2024, hundreds of spectators gathered at the Yacht Club to witness the

race start.

Thanks to Wildlife Coast Cruises, a sold-out spectator ferry allowed fans to follow the race from the water. For 2025, the spectator ferry will return, with tickets available soon.

On race day, the Yacht Club will host a free BBQ, giveaways, and an excellent vantage point for spectators to watch the start.

Cowes Yacht Club encourages everyone to mark their calendars and join the excitement at 11am on February 15 to cheer on the sailors as they embark on this legendary challenge.

/ Sponsored article /

# Gary Ablett heading for Cowes

## GOLF

In a treat for football fans, most especially supporters of the Geelong Football Club, Gary Ablett Junior is coming to Phillip Island.

Coined "The Little Master Gary Ablett Jnr live on Phillip Island", the event on April 23 is at the Phillip Island Golf Club.

The evening promises to

be "a deep dive that goes far beyond Gary's AFL career".

Ablett will discuss his years at Geelong, including his premierships, teammates, opponents, coaches, that move to the Gold Coast, Brownlows, his return to the mighty Cats, family, charity work and post career projects.

The event includes a live interview, audience

Q&A, silent and live auctions, with limited edition memorabilia.

Tickets start from \$29 for juniors through to an adult "show and photo" package for \$99.

Doors open at 7pm, photos at 7.30pm and the show starts at 8pm.

Tickets available now at: [ablett-philip-island.eventbrite.com.au](http://ablett-philip-island.eventbrite.com.au)

# Results from the green

## GOLF

### Tuesday, January 21

**Men's 18H Stableford**  
Overall winner: Robert Fabiny (20) with 41 pts.

A Grade winner: Phillip Bencraft (9) with 36 pts C/B.

B Grade winner: Gary Thompson (18) with 38 pts.

C Grade winner: Robert Fabiny (20) with 41 pts.  
BDL: 33 pts C/B.

NTP: 5th Garry Skelton, 7th Kai Cashman, 10th Brent Scott, 17th Brenton O'Brien.

**Men's 9H Stableford**

Overall winner: Steve Rieger (24) with 22 pts from Bryan Pirouet (23) on 20 pts.  
BDL: 17 pts.

### Wednesday, January 22

**Women's 18H Stableford**  
Overall winner: Kaz Egan (34) with 40 pts.

A Grade winner: Tracey Cuff (20) with 36 pts.

B Grade winner: Miyuki Yamaguchi (26) with 39 pts.

C Grade winner: Kaz Egan (34) with 40 pts.  
BDL: 31 pts C/B.  
NTP: 5th Jill Trickey, 7th

Lynn McCole, 10th Mel Naismith, 17th Cheryl White.

**Women's 9H Stableford**  
Overall winner: Norma Corr (43) with 15 pts C/B from Robyn Cornell (44) with 15 pts.  
BDL: 13 pts.

### Thursday, January 23

**Open 18H Stableford**  
Overall winner: Brendon Corvino (13) with 40 pts C/B.

A Grade winner: Paul Pendergast (9) with 37 pts.

B Grade winner: Brendon Corvino (13) with 40 pts C/B.

C Grade winner: Mike Fitzmaurice (19) with 38 pts.  
BDL: 33 pts C/B.

NTP: 5th Peter Cartwright, 7th Phillip Bencraft, 10th Brady Ross, 17th Daniel Pearce.

### Open 9H Stableford

Overall winner: Clive Scott (23) with 20 pts C/B from Basil Moloney (13) on 20 pts.  
BDL: 18 pts C/B.

### Saturday, January 25

**Men's 18H Stableford**  
Overall winner: Hugo Thompson (22) with 42 pts C/B.

A Grade winner: Mark Haringsma (10) with 42 pts.

B Grade winner: Greg Holland (17) with 40 pts.

C Grade winner: Hugo Thompson (22) with 42 pts C/B.  
BDL: 34 pts C/B.

NTP: 5th Brodie Mabilia, 7th Adrian O'Gorman, 10th Travis Johnson, 17th Stephen Pewtress.

**Women's 18H Stableford**  
Overall winner: Emma Hall (4) with 39 pts from Susan Brown (25) on 37 pts.

A Grade winner: Emma Hall (4) with 39 pts.

B Grade winner: Marilyn Jamieson (33) with 36 pts.

BDL: 32 pts C/B.

NTP: 7th Joanne Disher, 10th Emma Hall, 17th Vicki Amato.

### Open 9H Stableford

Overall winner: Alan Tindale (29) with 21 pts from Peter Lawrence (30) on 18 pts.  
BDL: 18 pts.

### Sunday, January 26

**Open 18H Stableford**  
Overall winner: Billy Taylor (24) with 36 pts C/B from Liz Gleeson (20) on 36 pts.

BDL: 32 pts.

**Open 9H Stableford**  
Overall winner: Kerri Deaton (43) with 18 pts from Tony Sheehan (15) on 17 pts.

**AUSTRALIAN AIR SAFARIS**  
BY KIRKHOPE

**Around French Island**  
National Catamaran Challenge  
2025

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Captains Mostyn, Lara, Trinity, Asha and Hugh happy to collect SGB's third place award.

# SGB retain third place in regionals

## SWIMMING

A long drive to Mildura did nothing to dampen the enthusiasm of the South Gippsland Bass Swim Club (SGB) competitors.

Seventy four swimmers and their families made the trip to compete in the 2025 Victorian Country Championships.

The team – one of the largest in the club's history – held their own in the three-day event, racing against the best of rural Victoria.

SGB once again finished third for the third year in a row, leading to excitement amongst competitors.

They were also only one of three Gippsland clubs to finish in the top 10.

Excitement continued during presentations as SGB

swimmer Archie Smyth received the Rod Godfrey award for the highest U13 aggregate score.

Archie won four golds in all strokes, 100m events for his age and was second placed in the IM, as well as medalling in the relays.

Bowen Gough, watching on day one was amazed at the number of SGB competitors.

"I remember when we would come to these events with three or four swimmers and now look how many of you there are."

Competitors raced in heats throughout the morning and returned to take part in the evening's finals and relays.

SGB took home two gold medals on day one during the final's session.

Swimming outside in the

scorching midday sun with temperatures reaching 40 degrees proved a challenge for competitors who are used to training indoors. However this didn't deter SGB who put in a superb effort, with many competitors achieving personal bests and national qualifying times.

The team's relay competitions highlighted the depths of swimming within the club with most A and B teams finishing within the top eight and taking home points for the club.

Coach Sam praised competitors.

"They (the SGB team) have all been inspirational in their own way, lifting at times when they needed to."

Additionally, Coach Dylan was thrilled with their efforts. "On day two, our B team

relays worked hard and earned the SGB team 34 points in their efforts.

"We also had some people bring home medals they never thought they would."

"Byron, one of the multi-class swimmers has been proudly showing his off."

Coach Caiden was pleased, stating that "there have been many inspirational swims" and Coach Lorri loved seeing her multi-class swimmers do so well.

The squad was joined by many of their families, making the most of the trip and enjoying the local sights.

Competitors now have a short break before preparing for several big competitions in the coming weeks.

For results and more photos go to [www.pisra.com.au/sport](http://www.pisra.com.au/sport)



Archie Smyth was presented with the Rod Godfrey award for the highest U13 aggregate score.



The mixed medley A team who placed second.

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