

# PHILLIP ISLAND & SAN REMO ADVERTISER

Your Community Voice!

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 19, 2020

\$1.40 Incl. GST



## Police raid nets big haul

There was plenty of action on the streets of Cowes last Thursday, with police raiding four local properties.

More than \$650,000 worth of allegedly stolen goods and cash were seized during a major police operation which saw four local properties raided last week.

Two Phillip Island men have been remanded in custody.

The raid was the result of a six-month investigation into a series of local burglaries across Phillip Island and Bass Coast.

Police allege 17 businesses were targeted.

The raid recovered items alleged to have been stolen including cash, jewellery, a boat, motor vehicles, a jet ski and motorbike, with a total estimated value of more than \$650,000.

Senior Sergeant Andy O'Brien said the investigation began when local police identified a pattern to a series of burglaries.

"There was a similar mode of operation, so police put together a targeted, extensive, behind-the-scenes investigation."

He said the allegations included theft of safes which contained valuables and cash.

Snr Sergeant O'Brien said the police's hard work had paid off and it was "a good result" for the local community. He confirmed that some assets had been recovered, which would be "treated as alleged proceeds of crime



More than \$650,000 worth of alleged stolen goods and cash, including jewellery, a boat, motor vehicles, a jet ski and motorbike were seized.

and go through the justice system."

A 19-year-old Cowes woman and a 32-year-old Cowes woman were also arrested, and both were released pending further enquiries.

The 27 and 28-year-old Cowes men were charged and appeared in Wonthaggi Magistrates' Court last week.

The magistrate ordered the men to be remanded in custody until their next appearance in court in November. He refused bail, saying it was

not justified due to the seriousness of the crime.

### Community relief

The arrests will provide relief for the local businesses that were targeted over the past six months.

In June, the Advertiser reported the spate of local robberies had created extra anxiety for small business owners and tradies, who were already struggling under the impact

of Coronavirus.

One local business owner said a safe was stolen from their home in March, just as the first Covid lockdown was announced and they personally knew of four other businesses that have suffered a similar fate.

"It seems to be targeting the homes of small businesses," they said.

"The police told us, it's as if they've already been in your house. They know where things are, and what they are looking for."

At the time, the business owner told the Advertiser they were frustrated at the lack of progress in the investigation, however last week's raid shows police work behind the scenes had continued.

At the time, Area Commander, Inspector Paul Bruders confirmed detectives were investigating a spate of robberies targeting home safes.

"Clearly someone knows these are business people and where they live."

"It's likely it will be someone who knows who they are and where they operate and that's what our detectives are looking at," he said.

More recently police called for the community's help to find a boat stolen from a house in Cowes and said there had been a number of incidents of tools being stolen from vehicles and trailers.

## Phillip Island 0: gas industry 1, say lawyers

The State Government has favoured industry over the local community in refusing to delay the environmental assessment of AGL's proposed Western Port gas terminal during Coronavirus, according to lawyers and conservation groups.

The groups have blasted Victorian Planning Minister Richard Wynne's decision last week to proceed with next week's August 26 closing date for AGL's 10,000-page Environment Effects Statement (EES), instead of delaying it during pandemic restrictions.

Environmental Justice Australia principal lawyer Nick Witherow said the Andrews' government gave AGL "as much time as they needed" to prepare the EES, "at one stage delaying the submission of the EES by nearly 12 months".

"The government's timeline prioritises industry over community," Nick said.

"Meanwhile, the community gets only a brief window during a State of Disaster and Stage 4 restrictions."

"The EES timetable was developed before Victoria escalated to Stage 4 restrictions. It is outdated and unfair."

Nick said the decision was hypocritical, with the government suspending Parliament because of Coronavirus and delaying several other critical decisions in the wake of Covid-19.

"The same government expects the community to battle on when restrictions curtail the public's ability to properly engage in the EES process or adequately prepare for the public hearings."

"Western Port communities can hardly meet this restrictive and unfair deadline ... It's impossible to deal with the complexity, size and scope of the EES under these circumstances."

Mr Wynne last week said halting the EES process until lockdown restrictions were eased would introduce "severe procedural uncertainty" in coastal communities.

### "Unprecedented"

Victor Komarovsky, Community Organiser at Environment Victoria, said it was "unprecedented" to expect a community to review and make submissions on 11,000 pages during a pandemic.

"This is the first gas import terminal Victoria has seen, and it is proposed for the middle of a protected wetland ecosystem. It isn't clear why this assessment process can't wait until the pandemic is under control."

"Given these circumstances, it's hard to say the community around Westernport Bay is being given a fair go against a major energy company."

Continued page 4

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# PHILLIP ISLAND

## 7 DAY WEATHER FORECAST



### Bass Coast COVID-19 update\*

As of Monday, August 17

**7502**  
tests done locally

**10**  
Local residents tested positive

**3**  
Active cases

\*From BCH Assessment clinics only since March.

# Pool one step closer!

Bass Coast Shire Council has appointed Otium Consulting to complete a business case for the Phillip Island Aquatic and Leisure Centre.

The work will include operational and concept plans, which Council say is necessary before progressing to detailed design and funding for the project.

The business case will also include redevelopment of the Bass Coast Aquatic Centre in Wonthaggi.

The Phillip Island community has been lobbying for a pool since the 1990s.

After sustained pressure from the Phillip Island Aquatic Centre Fund Inc, Council finally listed a Phillip Island aquatic centre in its ten-year financial plan in 2014/15, nominating the centre could be built between 2021-2023.

Council said the business case was critical to provide impor-

tant information relating to facility construction, ongoing maintenance and operational costs.

Once the report is completed, Council will then consider its options on how each project will be progressed to detailed design and then subsequently funded, including expected timelines for each.

Bass Coast Shire Mayor, Cr Brett Tessari said that it was incredibly important to support the community's aspirations to deliver quality aquatic and recreation facilities both on Phillip Island and in Wonthaggi.

"Phillip Island has been longing for a community swimming pool for years, and the existing facility in Wonthaggi needs to be redeveloped into a modern facility of today's standards.

"We are committed to delivering both of these important commu-

nity facilities, both of which are identified in our Long Term Financial Plan and supported by our Aquatic Strategy for Bass Coast.

"We will continue to advocate to the state and Federal governments for grant funding to make both of these projects a reality," Cr Tessari said.

Negotiations are still underway with the current landowner to finalise the sale for the land at the southwest corner of the intersection of Phillip Island and Ventnor roads, also known as the Cowes Carnival Site.

The land is the subject of a Public Acquisition Overlay (PAO), after the Minister for Planning gazetted Amendment C153.

Council said the application of the PAO reserves the land, so that it can be "acquired to establish and enhance the public open space network on Phillip Island".

The land is earmarked to be home to the Phillip Island Aquatics and Recreation Precinct, which Council said will "provide Phillip Island with essential recreation and aquatics facility to improve the health and wellbeing of the local community and visitors to the Island".

Otium is currently in the initial stages of the project, which includes reviewing information from previous studies undertaken by Council.

In addition, Council said it has advised Otium of community-led planning information, which includes the significant efforts of the Phillip Island Aquatics Working Group, to ensure all information is considered.

The Business Case is anticipated to be completed by the end of 2020, with future planning works and further community engagement expected in 2021.



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LK0474

## "Exciting news"

The Phillip Island Aquatic Centre Fund Inc has welcomed the news that Bass Coast Shire Council has appointed Otium Consulting to complete a business case for the Phillip Island Aquatic and Leisure Centre.

"We are pleased to be part of this exciting news from Council regarding aquatics," said Peter McMahon, from the PIACF management committee.

He said it will take time to correctly design the pool, which is why the group is supporting Council's position at present.

"PIACF has been working with many of the sporting groups on Phillip Island and have shared our combined groups output with Council.

"Hopefully, we will see a wonderful recreational master plan for Phillip Island developed by Council shortly."

After 27 years of activity, the Phillip Island Aquatic Centre Fund Inc believe the first stage of the development of the new Phillip Island recreation precinct will see an Aquatic Centre being built.

Peter said the Bass Coast Shire Council is well into the planning phase and will be advocating for funding commitments from state



Details of what the new aquatic centre might look like will be on display at the Phillip Island Aquatic Centre Fund AGM in October.

and Federal governments prior to the coming election cycle.

### Upcoming AGM

PIACF plans to display details of what the Aquatic Centre might look like in detail at their Annual General Meeting on October 6.

Because of COVID-19 restrictions, the AGM would be a zoom meeting for members only.

"For membership, please see our website and join now. As a member you will receive an invite to the zoom meeting, with details about how to access the meeting," Peter said.

"At some time after the AGM, we will showcase our "Sporting Field of Dreams" at a community meeting. This is an aspirational plan for the

entire 34 hectare site, which will be developed over time.

"This will include football, netball, cricket, basketball, gymnasium, soccer, skatepark and other sporting and recreational facilities, as per requirements of the local clubs.

"We are anticipating a state-of-the-art, world's best practice facility using totally renewable energy and providing easy access between aquatics and other sporting pavilions," Peter said.

"A facility that will enable our community to support and develop sporting interests for generations to come. We hope the entire Phillip Island and San Remo community will get behind this "Sporting Field of Dreams" to make it a reality."

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

## Firey thieves caught out

It was a busy week for Cowes police, who caught two men stealing from a rural property in Grantville last Wednesday.

The men were caught cutting a recently felled tree into firewood.

The police then discovered the men were driving a stolen vehicle and the trailer they were using to load the wood had recently been stolen from the Venus Bay Lifesaving Club.

After a search police also found drugs and weapons.

A 39-year-old male from Cape Woolamai and a 47-year-old male from Cowes were arrested and charged with numerous offences including theft, trespassing and drug and weapon offences.

They were bailed to appear before the Korumburra Magistrates Court in December.

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# Phillip Island will be "massively" impacted by gas "factory"

A Rhyll resident and retired civil engineer says Phillip Islanders should be gravely concerned about the impacts of AGL's proposed "gas factory" in Western Port, especially the impact of some of the world's biggest ships in the bay.

Peter Balfe - who was involved with major infrastructure projects during his career - was highly critical of AGL's 10,000-page Environment Effects Statement (EES), with submissions due August 26.

He said the EES failed on multiple levels.

Firstly, Peter said the ships required for this project were "massive", about 350m long and 50m wide, with about 40 coming in and out of the bay each year - or 80 shipping movements.

"Islanders need to understand the LNG tankers are 20 per cent bigger than the biggest cruise ships that we have seen in Western Port," Peter said.

"These tankers will presumably need to anchor in the holding area adjacent to Cowes and Silverleaves, but there is no mention of this in the EES. Any proper consultation process would have revealed noise and light spill from vessels anchored in that area, and potentially the safety of large LNG tankers, but this isn't even mentioned."

Phillip Island Conservation Society president Jeff Nottle said additional tugs and queuing of vessels will mean the north shore of Cowes will have an "industrial vista".

"Tourists do not visit Phillip Island to see industrial waterways of gas tankers," Jeff said, adding the "environment is our economy".

Jeff said the EES gave no consideration to the potential effects on tourism, or on recreational fishing.

Peter said he recently contacted the harbour master at Hastings after seeing one of the bigger cruise ships dragging its anchor in strong currents off Rhyll.

"After that experience I expected there would be an assessment of the potential effects of anchoring a tanker 50m wide with a draft of 12m below waterline in tidal flows of almost one metre per second. Yet this is not mentioned in the EES," Peter said.

He said another significant environmental issue for the bay from AGL's proposal was the process that converts LNG to gas at Crib Point.

"The process will pump up to 480,000 litres of sea water out of the bay each day to raise the temperature of the LNG so that it can be piped to Pakenham as a gas," Peter said.



Peter Balfe said a significant environmental issue for the bay from AGL's proposal was the process that converts LNG to gas at Crib Point, sucking in 480,000 litres of sea water, which is then pumped back into the bay 7C colder and chlorinated.

"This water is chlorinated as it enters the gas factory and is pumped back into the bay 7C colder. As would be expected, this has significant impacts in the immediate vicinity of Crib Point."

Peter said there was no precedent in Australia for this kind of project, and despite hundreds of pages of technical reports the EES does not consider whether this gas import facility is really required.

"The state and Federal governments just seem intent on locking into expansion of the domestic gas industry as a panacea for rising energy costs."

"With the experience of the recent disastrous bushfires you would expect them to be looking for alternatives that will address climate change and take advantage of the significant cost reductions in wind and solar energy generation and battery storage but these matters are not even contemplated in the EES."

Peter said it was "crazy" for Australia to be importing liquified gas from overseas to Crib Point when this nation is the world's second biggest gas exporter.

"It just doesn't make sense, and the EES gives no consideration to the environmental costs of turning the gas to a liquid somewhere overseas, shipping it across the world and then turning it back into gas at Crib Point."

# Demolition green light

Demolition of the Cultural Centre in Cowes will start this month.

Deconstruct Group, the company awarded the tender to demolish the building, will take over the site on August 24.

Bass Coast Shire Council's Manager of Major Projects, Damian Prendergast said the building's internal fixtures will be stripped first, then work will begin on the outside.

The design for the new building is not yet completed (see separate story) and construction is not due to begin until May 2021.

Community groups Island Voice and Bass Coast Ratepayers and Residents Association have repeatedly questioned why the building is being torn down without a final design and full funding in place.

Mr Prendergast said the timing of the demolition was due to concerns about the possible presence of asbestos on the site.

An asbestos audit of the building (known as a Division-6 audit) found asbestos on the perimeter of

the building, as part of the foundation formworks.

"We don't know the extent of the asbestos. We know there's some, but we don't know how much," he said.

"If they (the previous builders) left all the formwork in the foundations, we want to be able to remove it under the hazardous material process."

"Starting the demolition (in August) allows time to remove the asbestos in a cost-effective manner."

A number of recent Council projects in Cowes have been delayed due to asbestos contamination, with Mr Prendergast saying Council had been "caught out and criticised for it".

He said these experiences were part of the consideration for the Cultural Centre timeline as well as timing the demolition to avoid traditional peak visitation at Christmas and Easter.

He said the demolition would not impact on as many people as originally thought, as community facilities like the Cultural Centre, were not open due Covid restrictions.

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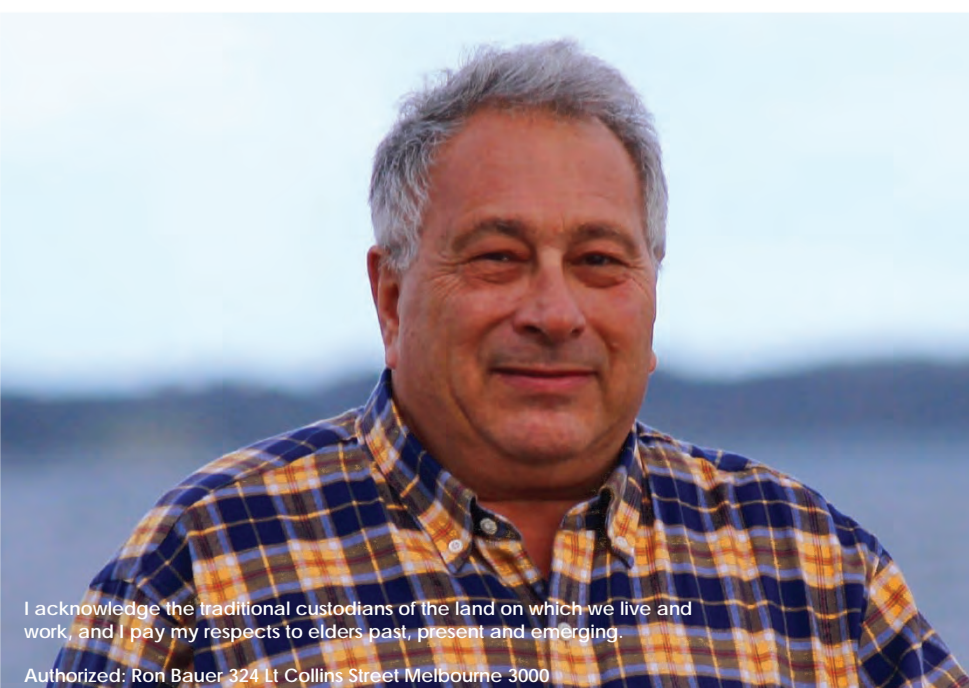
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# Phillip Island 0: gas industry 1, say lawyers AGL gas project: what's planned?

From page 1

Phillip Island Conservation Society president Jeff Nottle agreed, and earlier this year wrote to the Planning Minister requesting an extension of the EES process.

"AGL appear to be developing their own energy policy and governments are just being asked to rubber stamp what suits AGL," Jeff said, adding Phillip Island would not even benefit from the project, with no access to the reticulated gas supply.

Jeff urged the community to make submissions to the EES process.

PICS have set up 12 working groups to respond to the EES, including overview, marine impacts, Ramsar wetland, fire and explosion, noise, light, air and ground pollution, social impact and local economy.

But he said anyone with specialist technical knowledge could still help and provide input.

## Political divide

Federal Health Minister and Flinders MP Greg Hunt said he was "deeply disappointed" the Victorian government refused to delay assessing AGL's EES.

"I am deeply disappointed at the Victorian government's position and refusal to listen to the legitimate needs and expectations of the community and will continue to fight against the project," Mr Hunt said.

Member for Bass Jordan Crugnale defended Mr Wynne, saying he had already extended the EES consultation period from 30 days to 40.

"We have to keep the statutory process moving, with adjustments as necessary to allow for the present exceptional and dynamic circumstances," Ms Crugnale said.

"Stakeholders were also given advance notice of the intended exhibition period, at least a fortnight before the start, and were able to request the EES information packages in hard copy or online.

"Community consultation remains central to this process, submitters can have their say at the public inquiry and if required the proceedings may take place via video conference and this is to make sure everyone can participate."

Federal Monash MP Russell Broadbent reiterated Mr Hunt's comments.

"I am disappointed the Minister has decided to ignore locals' concerns regarding their ability to actively participate in the process during the COVID-19 pandemic," Mr Broadbent said.

"Not everyone is technologically savvy, has access to social media or has conferencing capabilities as suggested by the Minister and I would encourage the Victorian Government Minister and the local state member to consider further ways locals have the opportunity to be included in the process."

He added Australia should be looking at "reorganising our domestic gas supplies" so there is sufficient gas in the market.

AGL's plans would see liquified natural gas transported on up to 40 LNG super tankers – about 350 metres long and 50 metres wide – per year in Western Port.

A floating storage and regasification unit (FSRU) moored at Crib Point jetty will regasify the liquid natural gas by using a heat exchange system, drawing in up to 480,000 cubic metres of bay water per day into the unit via up to six pumps operating constantly.

Marine life including fish eggs and larvae will also be drawn in with the water.

This water will then be discharged back

into the bay 7C colder than the ambient temperature and containing residual chlorine.

A 55-kilometre pipeline will be built from Crib Point to Pakenham to pipe the gas.

The EES is open until August 26.

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

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

To make a submission go to <https://engage.vic.gov.au/crib-point-IAC>

## Council Update

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### Tender

**Tender No 20013 – Construction of a New Change Pavilion for Dalyston Netball Courts**

Council invites tenders from suitably qualified contractors for the construction of the Dalyston Netball Club pavilion and public toilet. The works shall incorporate building and drainage construction and all ancillary works outlined in the construction plans, the specification and associated contract documents. The tender period opens at 9.00am on Wednesday, 19 August 2020 and closes at 2.00pm on Wednesday, 9 September 2020. Tender documents can be downloaded free of charge from <https://basscoast.etenderbox.com.au>

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## Call for better bike safety

An increasing number of cyclists hit by cars on Thompson Avenue has led to one Bass Coast Shire councillor calling for urgent action.

Cr Michael Whelan will move a notice of motion at today's (Wednesday) council meeting calling for a review of safety on Cowes' main thoroughfare and a new bike path to be constructed between cars and the pavement.

The motion comes after a cyclist was knocked from their bike on Thompson Avenue in recent weeks, with police and ambulance attending.

"There are reports from the community of regular minor incidents along this bikeway," Cr Whelan said.

"I have been concerned about the bikeway on Thompson Avenue for some time since witnessing a couple of near miss incidents."

Cr Whelan said the location of the bikeway at the rear of angled parking was "a recipe for disaster".

"I have discussed this with council officers and there is a clear need for a new approach that puts the bike path beside the footpath between the curb and the parked cars," he said, adding this was mooted in the Cowes Activity Centre Plan following community consultation.

"There has been a resurgence in interest in cycling since the pandemic.

"But many people who would ride to town are concerned that roadside bicycle paths are not safe."

Cyclists were instead using footpaths.

"While I know this annoys some pedestrians,



A cyclist was knocked off their bike on Thompson Avenue in recent weeks, with police and ambulance attending.

I can understand why they do it."

Cr Whelan said Totally Renewable Phillip Island's new safe cycling strategy called for action to make cycling safe and accessible on Phillip Island.

"What is needed is an urgent review of the safety of the current cycling infrastructure and a clear plan implemented to make cycling safe."

"This should include safe storage for bikes at the Transit Centre and bike parking along Thompson Avenue."



## "Think about who you love, then think about them in ICU."

For Sarah, who's been battling coronavirus for nearly 8 weeks, being separated from her two little boys, has been heartwrenching. On top of coronavirus attacking every one of her body systems, intense pain and acute breathing difficulty, she still has no idea when she will be well enough to see her boys. Sarah's hope is that by us all doing the right thing, no one else will have to experience the heartache her family has.

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To learn more of Sarah's story go to [vic.gov.au/CORONAVIRUS](https://vic.gov.au/CORONAVIRUS)

STAYING APART  
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Authorised and published by the Victorian Government, 1 Treasury Place, Melbourne

# Go Autopro

If you haven't seen it yet, autO-barn Cowes is now autopro!

The old autO-barn store at 154 Thompson Avenue has been transformed.

The bright fresh new signage certainly catches the eye, and if you have been looking for a reason to visit the store, they are having an official grand opening this Saturday.

The original autO-barn store has successfully traded in Thompson Avenue for over three years. The idea to open in Cowes came about when owners Peter and Gavin from the Wonthaggi store wanted to find a way to service and look after Phillip Island better.

They said it had become apparent that the trip to Wonthaggi had become more arduous due to traffic changes and the number of cars on the road.

The initial idea was for a 'pop-up' store in Cowes to provide an outlet for automotive car parts and accessories. This was the first of its type in Australia and it was an instant success.

Peter said the pop-up store was welcomed by the Phillip Island community, "which paved the way for its success".

The transformed store might have a new look, but inside customers will find familiar faces and the same great level of customer service.

Store managers Charlie and Aaron are proud of the service they provide.

"Finding the solution for a customer is the main focus," Charlie said.

"Being a smaller store doesn't mean we can't get it for you. We are specialists at sourcing a product for our customers."

The Cowes store is one of three



The new autopro store in Thompson Avenue is holding a grand opening this Saturday and Charlie Phillips and Adam Bowler are looking forward to welcoming customers.

stores sporting a new look and new uniform, with stores in Leon-gatha and Wonthaggi also getting the make-over.

Owner Gavin said the new auto-pro brand will allow the business to grow and expand.

"What doesn't change is the top level customer service, the big brands available and the positive

experience you have already been experiencing with us."

Saturday's grand opening starts with a 25 per cent off store-wide offer, as well as bigger specials throughout the store.

It's the perfect opportunity to stock up on all your automotive needs ... and maybe get in early and find that perfect Father's Day gift.

Supporting local business, creates local jobs.

RUSSELL BROADBENT MP  
Federal Member for Monash



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# New designs weeks away

New concept designs for the Cowes Cultural Centre will be released in early September.

Architectural firm Jackson Clements Burrows, appointed in May, is due to present concept designs to key community groups at the end of August.

The general community will be able to view the designs when they are posted on the council's website in early September.

Bass Coast Shire Council's Manager of Major Projects, Damian Prendergast said the new designs would be based on the concepts prepared by Perkins Architects in October 2019.

The designs would also take into consideration feedback from the "extensive community consultation" undertaken by Perkins and architectural firm Terroir over the past

five years.

Mr Prendergast described the concept designs prepared by Perkins as "a sizing exercise", to make sure the new building could accommodate the requirements of each of the groups using the facility.

The new plans by JCB would look closely at the relationships between the existing groups and rearrange where things sat in the building, he said.

"We're looking to engage with groups that have a dedicated space in the building by the end of August," he said.

This includes the library, historical and genealogical societies, community art gallery, and visitor information centre.

He said meetings would also be organised with groups that hire the current facility on a regular basis.

## What's the plan?

Mr Prendergast said JCB had developed concept designs for the floorplan of the new Cultural Centre, "working on the spatial arrangement for the building", and that work was now underway on what the outside could potentially look like.

"Initially these will be in sketch form, then in a month's time, we expect to have full 3D drawings."

He said there would be opportunities for the community to have input and "we will certainly take on feedback".

The format of the different stages of the consultation was yet to be finalised.

"In this Covid world, you have to pick and choose how you consult, and we're working out the best way to handle that," Mr Prendergast said.

"There will be a chance for groups to make sure their space works for them and their relationship with the other groups in the building."

He said he expected the general public would be keen to comment on the design and it was important that the building complemented the site and was representative of Phillip Island.

## Poor communication

For community groups that use the current facility, the consultation cannot come soon enough.

Graeme Clausen, President of the Phillip Island and District Historical Society, said the lack of communication about the project was disturbing.

"We have not had any contact with Council, councillors or the architects since we had a meeting with the original architects (Perkins) over the redesign of the existing building."

He said the group only found out about the new building concept when the plans were posted on Council's website, after the October 2019 Council meeting.

"Why don't they communicate with us and tell us what is going on? They could have sent an email around to the interested parties and let us know."

"There's no communication at all. I find that disturbing. Almost tends you to believe they are just going to go ahead regardless of what everyone else wants."

Mr Prendergast said the Historical Society would be contacted in the next fortnight and there had been previous contact via its secretary.

"We are looking to meeting and engage with them near the end of August," he said.

Graeme said at this point, the Historical Society did not know if the space in the new building would be fit for purpose.

He said as a museum, certain requirements needed to be considered for their space, in terms of lighting and temperature control.

"It would be responsible for Council to take note of the requirements that have been laid down for museums."

Aleta Groves from the Community Art Gallery said she had contacted Council herself at the end of July, to get an update on the project, as no one from the new architectural firm had been in touch with the group.

## Community concerns

In April, Bass Coast Shire CEO Ali Wastie said the project was fully funded and "absolutely going ahead", in response to concerns from local community groups about the timing of the project, given the current economic uncertainty due to COVID-19.

Peter Paul, a former Mayor and member of Phillip Island Voice expressed serious reservations about proceeding, including demolition of the existing building.

"What fascinates me is there's no let-up in terms of demolition or redevelopment of the Cultural Centre. Is this the most opportune time given the economic situation of council and the impact of the virus? Do we need to push it over at this time," he asked.

Island resident Andrew Marston also disputed the timing and lack of consultation around the demolition.

"Given the current situation (with coronavirus) is it prudent to commit such a large sum (\$19 million)," Andrew asked.

At the April Council meeting, Ronnie Bauer, who is standing as a candidate at the council elections in October, said the shire should delay the centre's redevelopment.

"Though not ideal, it is a perfectly functional centre and this one measure alone would save \$19 million," he said.

Cowes resident Peter McMahon, asked why the centre is marked for demolition when "the community has not been part of any consultation process", including on its future design.

At the time, Ms Wastie defended the decision to proceed with the project saying the Deputy Prime Minister had already been in touch asking for a list of projects that could stimulate the economy.

"The Federal Government is looking for projects to get the economy up and running. This will create jobs in construction and new opportunities for locals."

The Council has secured \$10 million for the project via the state government's Community Infrastructure Loans Scheme and has said it is continuing to pursue other funding opportunities.



Australian Government

# We're extending financial support

The Australian Government is extending JobKeeper until 28 March 2021 and the temporary Coronavirus Supplement for those on income support until 31 December 2020, after which income support will continue.

For JobKeeper and the temporary Coronavirus Supplement there will be some changes to payments and eligibility to support businesses and households who need it most.

For information on how these changes affect you, visit [Australia.gov.au](http://Australia.gov.au)



28 Mar 2021

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Payment

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Coronavirus Supplement

Income support continues

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Authorised by the Australian Government, Canberra



# Year 8 students adventure on the Island

Normally, at this time of the year, Year 8 students from Newhaven College would attend their annual camp in Gippsland.

Given the current challenges of COVID-19 the camp could not go ahead.

But with some inventive thinking and co-operation between college staff and the neighbouring Phillip Island Adventure Resort, an outdoor program with many challenging experiences and

elements was put together for the students.

The four-day event allowed the students to experience the social and emotional learning program of the College's "You Can Do It" lessons.

"You Can Do It" highlights the five keys to success: Getting Along, Confidence, Resilience, Persistence and Organisation.

These keys provide the framework for students to develop life-long skills which will help them

work through the many challenges adolescents face as they move through their school years.

Each morning the students walked over the road to the Adventure Resort and were greeted by the activity leaders and staff.

Students were challenged with activities that were designed to develop leadership, teamwork, critical and creative reasoning skills, as well as building confidence, getting along with each other and having fun.

Returning to school on Friday, fun and challenging activities were organised for the students including a Just Dance competition, Discover Me Career Match, Kahootz challenge and Trangia cooking sessions.

"Hearing from the staff at the Adventure Resort that our students are the most "switched on" and the best they have seen, is something we are very proud of," said a College spokesperson.

"We hope our students move forward through Term 3 and 4 better equipped to meet their future challenges, especially as we move into the Learning from Home program for Term 3.

"Newhaven College would like to thank the team at the Adventure Resort for everything they



Mya Brosnan, one of the Year 8 Newhaven College students who took part in an outdoor program at the Phillip Island Adventure Resort, when Covid restrictions meant the annual Gippsland camp could not go ahead.

did in accommodating us through the week. Their support of our school over many years has been greatly appreciated. They are wonderful neighbours to have."

**STAGE 3 CLOSURE**

From Thursday 6th August, all branches and mobile libraries will be closed until further notice.

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ADVERTORIAL

## Preservation of the school/ community sanctuary

The history of the school/community sanctuary is possibly not well known so here is an abridged version.

In 1986 the then visionary Principal formulated a plan to save the three acres of remnant vegetation behind the pool for perpetuity as an area to be preserved for native and indigenous flora and fauna. This unique sanctuary became a well-used, irreplaceable, and priceless outdoor classroom that was the envy of other Victorian schools.

Many volunteers worked tirelessly so the students were able to develop their skills and learn about the environment, recognise environmental problems and suggest some tactics to address them. It should be pointed out here that the sanctuary was an integral part of the school curriculum and could be once again. Grants are surely available to fund the rebirth of the sanctuary to bring it back to how it was and also for the ongoing maintenance.

The school sits on 14 and a half acres so to place a large competition gym which will be noisy and polluting as well as constructing a solid building footprint in such a peaceful remnant bushland setting which is home for indigenous flora and in particular the fauna, is totally irresponsible.

Remnant vegetation once bulldozed can never regrow.

So much vegetation removal has occurred on our island that with climate change threatening our future it is very important that we teach the children to care for our fragile environment, not to destroy it.

Technology is taking over with learning and leisure activities, with screen time becoming the focus of people's lives. Therefore native wildlife



areas, bushland, parks and gardens act as a counterbalance.

There surely has to be a site somewhere else in the school boundaries. Sport and fitness are important but not at the cost of the loss of an irreplaceable sanctuary - the habitat of endangered bird life i.e. the Swift Parrot, the Powerful Owl and the Grey-headed Flying Fox and other important fauna species.

It will be impossible, if the gym goes ahead in the sanctuary, to rescue all the wildlife before construction starts. When the tennis courts invaded the sanctuary the industrial rubbish during and after construction was appalling and disgraceful. Put simply THE SANCTUARY IS NOT COMPATIBLE WITH A GYM.

The Minister for Education, School Building Authority, Cowes Primary School Council and Principal should be made to realise that environmental vandalism within the sanctuary is totally unacceptable and avoidable.

## S.O.S.

### {SAVE OUR SANCTUARY}

The new Cowes Primary School gym will be built completely within the School/Community Sanctuary which is the last known surviving remnant vegetation in the centre of Cowes as well as being designated "Land for Wildlife".

We are not against the gym it is just the location. There are other sites within the School grounds more appropriate for this type of development such as along the Eastern boundary outside the Sanctuary.

Below are some facts that must be taken into consideration before this project begins:

- Approximately 3 billion fauna have been killed or displaced in the recent bushfires.
- At least 1 million hectares of forestry has also been burnt.

- With the overdevelopment of Phillip Island, native and endangered fauna are losing their habitat.

- The impact of Climate Change affects all of us & the Sanctuary must be kept intact as it works as a "Carbon Sink".

- Remnant vegetation can never be replaced, once it is gone it is gone forever.

The action of sacrificing the Sanctuary for a large solid building is an act of environmental vandalism.

What can you do to help? Sign the petition which is on line at [www.change.org/sanctuarycowes](http://www.change.org/sanctuarycowes), write letters to the papers, contact your local Member of Parliament and also The Minister for Education.



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# Libraries are closed but still here for you

A report from West Gippsland Libraries

After being open for almost six weeks, libraries are now closed again during the latest Stage 3 Covid restrictions.

"It's been a changing and ever-evolving few months and we'd like to thank our staff who continue to show outstanding resilience and innovation adapting to these changes. We'd also like to thank our communities who have been sending us supportive messages and positive feedback," said Leanne Williams, West Gippsland Library CEO.

The WGL team have been busy purchasing new titles, both the physical variety, as well as e-books and e-audiobooks with the latest addition to the e-magazine collection. 3,400+ titles are now available to library members on RB Digital.

WGL is excited to announce the launch of the next iteration of the highly successful Books By Us: School Publishing Collaboration project.

Nansi Kunze, local author and passionate supporter of public libraries and literacy, is the creative mind behind this concept. The innovative Books By Us concept turns classrooms

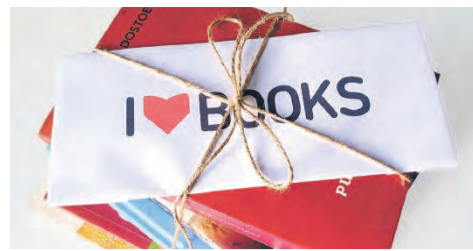
into publishing houses. This year, the program has been adapted to an online format, giving the senior primary students at Yarragon Primary School the opportunity to create their very own books.

"We are grateful to receive some funding towards the program from Victoria Writers Centre and Grace Marion Wilson Trust," said Kathie Olden, Manager Volunteers and Community Participation.

WGL are continuing their Home Delivery Service via Australia Post for all members within the area. Call a branch or register online for a resource parcel with a choice of genre which can include books, audiobooks, dvds and magazines, delivered free to your home.

"We're also continuing our Caring Calls program, reaching out to some of our most vulnerable and disconnected members to offer our home delivery service and any support we can during these challenging times," Leanne Williams said.

All loan due dates have been automatically extended to Thursday, October 1, including



Libraries are closed during stage 3, but you can still enjoy e-books, e-audiobooks and e-magazines and a range of online resources.

any items checked out for home deliveries, so there is no need to return items until the libraries reopen. Holds are not available to pick-up at this time. However, book boxes are available through our Home Delivery Service via Australia Post. Staff will make every effort to include holds in this delivery.

While the libraries are closed, support is available by calling branches during opening hours, email or the new live chat feature on the

WGL website, 9am-5pm weekdays.

For further support with online resources, including setting up and using library apps on your favourite digital device, book a TechTalk for a 20 minute, one-on-one call with a library staff member.

A range of virtual events and programs are available online for all ages, to enjoy from the comfort of your home. Catch up on all programs on the website and stay tuned for some exciting new events coming up soon. There are loads of e-resources including a wide range of e-books, e-audiobooks, e-magazines, digital newspapers, kid's activities and reading resources, streaming movies and online study courses. While you're browsing the website, check out the monthly Mental Health & Well-being blog with advice, tips and handy links to other resources to help support you through the current challenges.

To find out more or become a library member, call a branch or visit [wgrlc.vic.gov.au](http://wgrlc.vic.gov.au). Don't forget to sign up for the e-newsletter, visit the website and follow WGL on Facebook to stay up-to-date.



Australian Government

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## SHORT STACK

A quick roundup of news, views and opportunities

### Bass Coast Writers

Entries for this year's Bass Coast Prize for non-fiction writing close on September 4.

Last year, the inaugural competition attracted 42 entries ranging from personal memoir and true adventure through to biography, natural history and local history. Phillip Island's Christine Grayden was last year's winner, with her piece "Jobs that no longer exist: a memoir".

The prize is sponsored by Phillip Island writer and activist Phyllis Papps to encourage and support writers who have a strong connection with the Gippsland region.

It's one of the richest competitions for non-fiction in Australia, with a total of \$10,000 in prize money. The first prize winner will receive \$5000, second \$3000 and third \$2000.

For more information and entry criteria, visit [basscoastprizeforfiction.weebly.com/](http://basscoastprizeforfiction.weebly.com/), email [p.m.papps@waterfront.net.au](mailto:p.m.papps@waterfront.net.au) or call Catherine Watson on 0401 817 796.

### Dysons announce Community Grants

Dysons Community Grants program provide grants to support community groups and organisations around Victoria.

There are two rounds of \$10,000 grants annually. Eligible organisations include schools, sporting clubs, not-for-profit groups, charities and emergency services.

The first round of grants is now open with applications closing on October 9.

Details at [dysongroup.com.au/about/community-grants](http://dysongroup.com.au/about/community-grants)

### Garden and Home Expo cancelled

In a blow for local garden lovers, the popular Garden and Home Expo presented by the Drouin Lions Club has been cancelled due to COVID-19 restrictions.

"It is our priority to keep our community, exhibitors, and members safe. We are very disappointed after all the planning as this was to be a huge celebration for our 20th year," said Pam Sharmon from the Lions Club.

She thanked all their sponsors for supporting the event but said the current uncertainty made it impossible to go ahead. "We look forward to our 2021 Garden and Home Expo (October 9 and 10) being the best ever!"

### Accounting help for bushfire and drought recovery

Joining forces with not-for-profit Rural Aid, Chartered Accountants across Australia will donate their time and financial skills to help bushfire and drought affected primary producers (farmers) get back on their feet.

If you are a Rural Aid registered primary producer and would like to access this offer from Chartered Accountants Australia and New Zealand, please contact Rural Aid on 1300 327 624.

### Step it up this September

STEPtember is calling for registrations. Australia's leading health and wellness fundraising event, which runs in five countries around the world, starts on September 1.

The initiative challenges individuals and teams to take 10,000 steps per day for 28 days in a fun, safe and virtual environment – all while making a real difference to the lives of children and adults with cerebral palsy.

Last year, the campaign raised \$7.1 million and this year, the team has set their sights even higher. Those looking to register should visit [STEPtember.org.au](http://STEPtember.org.au)

Authorised by the Australian Government, Canberra

Covid has changed lives since it struck without warning back in March.

From school children forced to study remotely, through to businesses grappling to stay afloat; our aged care workers determined to keep their residents safe, through to community members suddenly locked down at home; no-one has escaped change. Some businesses have experienced a boom, others are doing it tough; still others have closed down.

The message coming through loud and clear from all local business operators is a heartfelt plea to community members to shop locally during this torrid time. The message is more important than ever before if some shop doors are to open again. Please shop locally, and support our local traders, who are struggling so hard to carry on.

## A message of hope from Kylie Rose

It's been a surreal experience and just doesn't seem fair that whilst we, at the Post Office, are busier than ever, so many of our friends, family and community members have lost their jobs. Living on an island that relies heavily on tourism and the businesses that support it, like hospitality and retail, we have been particularly hard hit.

Working at the Post Office, I have been so heartened by how many parcels and letters are being sent to loved ones, to brighten their days. Our parcel intake has increased 200 per cent, we don't even see these volumes at Christmas time!

My staff have displayed incredible resilience since March when the effects of COVID-19 began to be felt.

We have been working Sundays behind the scenes just to keep up with demand and to try and limit delays for our community.

It has been a sometimes stressful and exhausting job, with uncertainty around our exposure to a possibly deadly virus.

But what has kept us all going, is the kindness and patience displayed by our customers. Thank you for the chocolates, the flowers and the words of appreciation, it



The workload at Australia Post in Cowes has more than doubled over the past few months as local businesses ship out goods ordered on line; and parcels in their thousands arrive on a monthly basis for residents, during Stage 3 restrictions. Staff at Australia Post have been working over time to keep on top of the additional workload, and ensure the mail deliveries get through to everyone on time. Postal Manager Kylie Rose (right) and staff members Leonie Dunning and Julie Babb.

really makes each day much easier to face.

If I have one thing to ask of our incredible community, it is to please shop locally, support the traders who are doing it tough and have experienced a huge downturn in trade.

If you are still employed, then a subtle but powerful way to show your support is by shopping at the wineries, the toy shop, the grocer or butcher, ordering takeaway when you can.

Many are now offering on-line options too.

But above all, smile though your masks, our eyes still speak volumes.

Check in on your neighbours and let's not forget the sense of community that makes our Island so special.

It's times like these I am prouder than ever to call Phillip Island my home.

Stay safe and love to all from the team at Australia Post Cowes.



Jo Brooks, of Phillip Island Flowers, is pictured with Will Lone, who was out shopping for flowers for a special person, at the business on Monday.

## Flowers now harder to get

When Covid first hit, and Stage 3 restrictions were introduced, Phillip Island Flowers were kept very busy.

Jo Brooks, proprietor of the business, said that she had noticed an increase in the number of people sending flowers and gifts to their loved ones in that first lockdown period, as a means of sending love and support and keeping in touch.

Her problem over that period was that it was difficult to access flowers easily, with

everyone in lockdown.

"We managed, but we were running up and down the highway to do so," she commented.

Mother's Day in May was extremely busy for Jo and her staff.

"We only just managed to fill all of the orders we had. Flower supplies were very limited.

"Everything was coming down from Sydney. And it was not just flowers we were delivering. It was gifts as well."

It is different this time, however, Jo noted.

"Everything has slowed down. I think people are beginning to be very careful as the reality of the situation we are in starts to hit home."

"And it is difficult to access the variety of flowers that were the norm before Covid broke out.

"But we are OK," she said.

Jo would also like to thank everyone who has shopped with her, for the support they are giving.

"It is very much appreciated."

### AUTOMOTIVE

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"Please shop locally, support the traders who are doing it tough"

# Local support is greatly appreciated!

Donna Newton runs three businesses on Phillip Island ... The Coffee Co in Thompson Avenue, the nearby Jolly Lolly Trolley, and the Smith's Beach Store.

She employs 20 people and life has certainly not been easy since the Coronavirus crisis began.

"It's bloody hard" is her candid assessment of the last six months.

"For us overall, it is a mixed bag. We are doing 'nearly OK', but just," she says.

"I have had to work very long hours to keep everything running. And my staff have worked really hard. I am so grateful to them.

"My adult children have been amazingly supportive to me during this extraordinarily stressful time. Jen (Hayward) who manages the Coffee Co, Chris (Hayward) manages the Smith's Beach store, and Kirsti (Hayward) supports us all with whatever is needed, while also managing two kids doing remote learning at home.

"But it's been pretty hard to feel happy a lot of the time."

Donna said she has written to the MTO thanking the government for the support they are giving small business.

"Job Keeper, the business grants, and PAYG assistance is keeping us going. We are very fortunate as business operators to be given this sort of help.

"It does not replace lost business, but it does help a lot.

"I also cannot thank our customers enough. I would like to publicly say thank you to them for shopping locally when they can and supporting not just us but the other businesses that have stayed open."

## Gut wrenching

Donna says when the virus first hit, the first three or four weeks in March and April were "gut wrenchingly" hard.

Back in March, the choice she faced in her mind and had to make was: "Go hard or go home."



Donna Newton is pictured at the Smith's Beach store that she runs, with young staff member Katelyn Duffin.

She decided on "Go hard" with her main objective to keep her staff employed, including the two on her books who are on visas and therefore ineligible for any assistance if they were to lose their jobs.

To make a stressful time more difficult, in June, she was robbed.

Donna's current situation is not enviable.

"The Coffee Co is doing ok. It is holding on. Smith's Beach is quiet in any case at this time of the year

"It is the Jolly Lolly Trolley that has suffered the most," she says.

While she is eternally grateful for the support of her locals, she and her staff are upset at the poor behaviour of some who come through the door.

"When people come down and it's sunny and bright, and they get out and about, some forget about the rules and

regulations and object to complying with them.

"One of the hard things for me is to support my staff with dealing with people who have been angry and rude to them."

At the Jolly Lolly Trolley, customers are asked to place money in a bowl, and to take their change from the bowl, so that staff do not need to come into contact with it, thus reducing the risk of transmission for both customers and ourselves.

"Our approach is: "We take cash. Please put it in this plate. But amazingly some have objected to that.

"We are challenged as to why selling ice-cream and lollies is an essential service.

"Not everyone has to wear a mask, for reasons such as asthma, but this can create problems.

"They can be spoken to badly by other customers when they come into the shop, which creates tension and unpleasantness."

Donna has two staff members with underlying health problems, "who are concerned about catching the virus too".

In line with regulations, only a limited number of customers can come into the Jolly Lolly Trolley at one time. But this has been the cause of verbal abuse.

Because of the nature of the business, with children taking time to select their purchases, the queue waiting outside lengthens.

One family can easily take up five of the six spaces permitted and spend 15 minutes browsing.

"We don't hurry children choosing lollies. But that is a real challenge on

two fronts.

"It reduces an already slow turnover, and some waiting outside are less than understanding," Donna says.

Angry demands have been made for entry on the basis that "we don't have the virus" and "we are no threat to anyone".

"Staff are firm with the regulations. They are protecting themselves, the customer, and other people's families."

Donna is thinking of reconfiguring the premises to increase numbers allowed in at any one time, but it's a costly job "and we just don't know how long this will go on".

"We are trying to figure out alterations to address the problems that arise. We just want to protect everyone."

## Problems persist

The Smith's Beach store is physically able to run comfortably, but it is not without problems.

Donna says that in order to comply with restrictions on numbers and social distancing, she had to remove tables and chairs inside and outside that were bolted in. She initially resisted taping them off to comply with the new sitting regulations.

"I thought people would abide by the rules the government had introduced. But some people do forget or are confused about what applies.

"We are only allowed six people in the store, which normally could take 50. That comes at quite a cost."

Donna is determined to carry on and realises that at some point this very difficult period must end. Her back up plan is the sale of her house: which gives new meaning "Go hard or go home."

But Donna is determined, and she will carry on.

She wants to say thank you to the community "for shopping locally and supporting not just my enterprise but all the other businesses struggling to remain open."

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# Waterboy feels the pinch

Waterboy proprietor Jacquie Woods is in two minds about whether to remain open during this second Coronavirus lockdown period.

Jacquie shut the popular coffee, breakfast and lunch café down back in March when the first lockdown was announced, re-opening as soon as the regulations were relaxed, to the delight of her regular customers.

"The business held its own when we re-opened and was going along nicely, even though we were limited to 20 customers at any one time.

"I have to say that it felt uncomfortable at times with the large numbers of visitors who poured onto the island during that time, but we made it work," she said.

Names, times and dates of all patrons were recorded, and Jacquie and her staff stuck scrupulously to all of the new Covid regulations.

It was a bitter pill to swallow being regularly forced to turn patrons away daily, in an establishment that was used to seating 73.

"But I knew that this was necessary and had to be done. I fully accepted the situation, this is affecting everyone on some level," she said.

But fast forward to this second lockdown, when only takeaway can now be provided, and the story is a different one.

"This latest lockdown is a killer," she commented.

"People are not going out and that I can completely understand. Financially we're probably better off not opening the doors. We are hurting. "But we want to provide a



The Covid gloom lifted beautifully for Jacquie on Wednesday when four-year old Jackson Tambumrung visited with his mum, Waterboy staff member Jipp, and baby sister Maya, and presented Jacquie with a posy of flowers.

takeaway service for our awesome customers. And for my own mental health, as well as my staff's, we need to be here. "Sitting at home for weeks on end is something none of us wants to do."

Like most people, Jacquie finds it "unbelievable" to be in the situation we are all in.

For her, the opening of Waterboy four years ago was a dream come true.

What is so hard at this point is not knowing what lies ahead.

## Takeaway now on offer

Jacquie has now reinvented Waterboy for the time being, and is offering a takeaway breakfast and lunch menu.

Waterboy's favourite offerings are there and can also be ordered by phone in advance.

Patrons can ring their order through and nominate a time for collection.

The kitchen is open from 8am until 2pm daily (Waterboy is closed on Mondays and Tuesdays) and orders can be made by phoning 5952 5765.



Wildlife Coast Cruise operations have come to a full stop with the introduction of Stage 3 regulations. Operator John Dickie (left) is pictured in happier times at the launch of the Wilsons Prom Cruise program in 2017, with captain of the Brianna Lee Michael Hetherington, and then Mayor of South Gippsland Ray Argetino (right).

# Full stop for whale watching tours

Whale Watching cruises around Phillip Island have had to stop completely since the re-introduction of Stage 3 lockdown restrictions three weeks ago.

Like so many others, the return to Stage 3 is a blow for John Dickie and his Wildlife Coast Cruises crew, made even harder as they watch the sunny days and calm weather that has occurred lately which would have made idyllic cruising conditions for them.

John supports the restrictions.

He believes they are necessary; but not being able to operate is a blow to his business, and to staff members.

"The weather has been pretty much perfect," he comments.

But the three ferries he operates are all now high and dry, tied up at Rhyll, San Remo and Port Welshpool respectively.

The company was due to start their annual whale watching program at Wilsons Promontory on the weekend that the reintroduction of Stage 3 was announced. Instead, The Brianna Lee lies idle at Port Welshpool.

Up until the recent lockdown, and even operating with heavily reduced numbers, his whale watching cruises were going well.

"Even though we were limited with the numbers we could carry, we were doing quite well. "There were plenty of whales about."

"We had made a lot of changes and it was working for us with just the 20 passengers allowed on board."

Rules were scrupulously adhered to. Disinfecting of surfaces was carried regularly carried out, masks and gloves were worn when required, and single touch lunch boxes in compostable packaging were provided on the cruises around our shores.

"We are trying to keep everyone occupied now by doing maintenance on the boats," he comments.

He is grateful for Job Keeper and Job Seeker, to keep his staff employed.

However, the company has fallen through the cracks as far as state government relief for tourism goes.

A Bass Coast Council Covid grant is funding the erection of a cover over the back deck of the Kasey Lee, and enlargement of its upper deck area, which will enable the ferry to accommodate an additional 30 undercover passengers when Stage 3 restrictions are lifted.

He believes the previous 50 limit number will come back in for some time, before restrictions are eventually limited, and is pleased that the work is able to be carried out during this current lockdown.

John is involved in local tourism associations, and says that many in the tourism industry are doing it tough.

"Some have done well, but this is killing many others" is his assessment.

Like everyone else at the moment, he says "all we can do is hope there is an end to all of this soon."

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Trish McFee (left) drops off her computer to Dale Burdorf at Waterfront Computers. The business is striving for a 24-hour turnaround with computer repair work, because of the urgency for clients and students working from home in these difficult Covid times.

## Business is brisk at Waterfront

Business is brisk at Waterfront Computers in Cowes for owner Dale Burdorf and technician Zena Benbow.

Covid has certainly not slowed this business down.

The pair are flat out keeping up with the needs of community members, striving to fill orders, carry out repairs, and connect new clients to the NBN, in these strange and difficult Covid times.

"We've actually been busier with repairs, and sourcing items like printers, monitors and Wi-Fi solutions, which are getting hard to come by than before," says Dale who took over Waterfront three and a half years ago.

Demand for Waterfront's services has soared as students undertake remote learning, and large numbers of residents are now having to work from home.

Students and teachers have had to set up remote learning connections, and many employers and employees have had to set up home offices.

The demand is such that some equipment is now in very short supply.

Ink sales have also gone through the roof since the lockdown, he says.

Zena, the repair technician at Waterfront, describes her increased workload as "exhausting."

Whereas pre-Covid she completed a couple of repair jobs a day, in a three-day turnaround, repair work has tripled.

Zena still strives for a two to three-day turnaround because the equipment is urgently needed by clients.

Students need to be able to access remote learning with a reliable computer and internet services, as does everyone working from home.

The days are long and Zena, as a permitted worker, has had to send her own children back into school, in order to be able to keep up with the relentless demand.

Dale has noticed that people are much more inclined to buy locally now and to support local business.

"We hope this continues," he comments.

"We have certainly tried very hard to look after everyone's needs in these difficult times. Everyone now knows that there is a computer shop in Cowes."

He was delighted on Wednesday to take delivery of a new batch of printers that he had been waiting for.

The stock simply disappears from the shelves as fast as it arrives, Dale comments.

Waterfront Computers is located in Thompson Avenue opposite the Woolworths complex.

## Luxe Isle staying afloat

Kelly Solohub is the owner of "Luxe Isle", a fashionable ladies boutique in Cowes.

She hails from Byron Bay, and the boutique, which she has operated now for two years, reflects Phillip Island's surfing culture with trendy outfits on the racks, as well as designer clothing.

The Covid lockdowns have not been easy for Kelly, a busy mum who has to juggle home-schooling two young children, aged eight and ten years old, with running her Chapel Street business.

The children attend Cowes Primary School and have returned to home-schooling for the second time under the latest lockdown.

For Kelly this means helping the children with lessons delivered remotely, from 9am until 11.55am precisely.

Kelly then races off to open the doors of Luxe Isle at noon.

Hours are limited because of the lockdown until 2pm, and she operates from Wednesday through to Saturday.

Kelly pretty much sailed through the first Stage 3 lockdown without too much impact on the business.

Sales were on par with the previous year, and she was not too concerned.

When the first Stage 3 lockdown ended, the business continued to bubble along.

"It was really good during that in-between period. There were lots of tourists here in the school holidays, because no-one could travel very far. Phillip Island was busy and sales were good."

But it's a different story with the current lockdown, and Covid is beginning to bite.

"This time it has been really bad. Luckily, I do have online sales, and that has kept me afloat."

"Winter is usually quiet, but this is different. Right now there's not many around."

"We average between five and ten customers a day, and just a couple of sales."

"Knits are selling which is good," Kelly says.

And she is grateful for the support of her regulars.

Accessing stock is also not a problem, thankfully, be it from Melbourne or overseas.

Kelly was also fortunate to be awarded a Bass Coast Council Covid grant and she is using this to undertake a social media course, which will provide her with a better understanding of



Kelly Solohub is the owner of "Luxe Isle" a fashionable ladies boutique in Chapel Street Cowes. This second lockdown has been extremely tough for her business.

online marketing, particularly about the promotion of her brands and products.

Her immediate aim is to get through what is a pretty bleak lockdown period, in the hope that a great summer will eventuate.

But she is concerned that we may end up all just going around in circles.

"I don't know what the future holds and I am worried that this may keep on happening. That no sooner do we open up than we have to be locked down again."

"Most people in business here are in the same boat. It is a very difficult time."

Kelly says she understands that many people locally have lost their jobs, but others are doing just fine.

And she has an earnest message for them.

"Please shop locally as much as you can. If we want a thriving shopping centre in Cowes, and our businesses to be able to open their doors post-Covid, then please support them."

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The centrally located kitchen is the hub of the home, with large island bench, stylish Belling dual fuel quad oven, walk in pantry and ample storage.

## Immaculate family home

This immaculately presented family home is situated in a quiet court location, within the popular Whytesands Estate. If you are looking for a home that offers something a little different then you'll certainly find it here. The home has been cleverly designed to complement family living whilst providing maximum flexibility.

The master bedroom is situated at the front of the home and includes a walk-through robe to a generously sized ensuite. Continuing along the hallway, and to the left you will find a separate zone at the rear of the home which includes a second living area with study nook, family bathroom with separate toilet and two additional bedrooms with BIR's.

Warm and inviting, the centrally located kitchen is the hub of this home. A large island bench with room for seating means that you can pull up a stool and have a lovely chat over a cuppa, or is the perfect informal dining experience. Its stylish Belling dual fuel quad oven, large walk-in pantry and ample storage will suit the cook of the family, regardless of the level of expertise.

Extending out from the kitchen is the open plan dining and living area. Step out the sliding door to the rear decking and you will find a covered alfresco area, with electric heating unit on the ceiling, offering the ideal space for relaxation or entertaining.

The fully fenced backyard is designed for low maintenance and is the perfect secure area for pets or children to play, with its mixture of grassed, paved and stone areas.

Further features include double garage, solar panels, and an area to the east side of the house which is wide enough to be adapted for caravan or boat storage. Three split system reverse cycle units and ceiling fans throughout the home provide year-round comfort.

With so many extra features, this home is a must see.

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Premium floorcoverings through the home from the upgraded eco carpet perfect for allergies with deluxe plush underlay and the hardwearing bamboo flooring softens the house with earthy tones.

A spacious master bedroom with ensuite and double walk through robes complete with split system heating and cooling and premium tim-

ber plantation shutters. In addition, there are two more oversized bedrooms all with built in robes and a central bathroom.

The star of this home is the central open plan kitchen, living and dining that opens out to the fully enclosed alfresco complete with bistro blinds all of this north facing to keep your home light filled and warm.

- Additional Features
- Two heating and cooling split systems
  - Ceiling fans to all bedrooms
  - Plantation shutters throughout the home
  - Double car garage with remote
  - Side access with increased size and height for large caravan
  - Upgraded flooring throughout
  - NBN, Recycled Waters, underground power

Well-established garden complete with fruit trees including apple, peach, apricot and nectarine, two great olive trees and a fantastic herb garden.

This home is a must inspect. It will be sure to please anyone looking for retirement or someone who will enjoy all the upgrades. It's here waiting for you.

Call Alex Scott Cowes today to arrange your private inspection on 5952 2633.

## Private park-like setting in Smiths Beach

Features – large allotment – two living zones

This three-bedroom home originally from Box Hill has been maintained in great condition. It features two large open living spaces, large country kitchen looking to the back yard, two large double bedrooms and a third single bedroom, with a full under cover deck/outdoor living area and a sun room at the front – the perfect place to sit back relax and enjoy a good book.

Wood heating and three split systems offers you year around comfort. The property has just been painted throughout. Solar power helps with lower power bills. Plenty of room at the side for the caravan and boat.

A unique aspect of the property is the park-like setting offering full privacy and a feeling of being in the bush, yet the beach is just minutes away.

Call Alex Scott Cowes on 5952 2633 to arrange your private inspection or virtual tour.

\$550,000  
Two living areas, three bedrooms, two bathrooms.



This three-bedroom home, originally from Box Hill has been lovingly maintained in its Smiths Beach location.



Nestled in a park-like setting, the house includes a full under cover deck and outdoor living area.



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Dream on: Trenavin Park was constructed by founder and first president of the Phillip Island Shire Council AKT Sambell, and his wife Eleanor, in 1923.

## Island property

One of Phillip Island's most historic and prestigious properties has sold with a price guide from \$7-\$7.7 million.

The sale comes as new figures show small farm prices skyrocketed more than 64 per cent in Bass Coast in the past financial year – to \$34,846 per hectare – making it the state's seventh most expensive area for median small farms.

Trenavin Park, on the cliffs at Ventnor, is 33 hectares and last sold for \$4.25 million in September 2008.

Agent Sean Cussell from Prestige Homes said the property was sold in early August.

"We had a looming deadline because of Coronavirus. If it hadn't sold we would have had to take it off the market for six weeks because there are no inspections," Sean said.

He said he could not disclose the price nor the settlement date.

The current building was constructed by founder and first president of the Phillip Island Shire Council AKT Sambell, and his wife Eleanor, in 1923.

The five-bedroom house was built with locally sourced bricks and Welsh slate roof tiles, and has a craftsman-built timber staircase, coffered ceilings and timber wall panels, while

a long driveway is lined with cypress trees.

A second home, known as The Cottage, has three bedrooms, while Trenavin also has its own restored 1906 chapel – once the original San Remo church, which was transported to the property more than 30 years ago and has been used for weddings, concerts and events.

### Land boom?

Meanwhile figures show Bass Coast small farm prices surged more than 64 per cent, with a median small farm price of \$1.42 million, up 53.5 per cent year on year.

Bass Coast prices have surpassed Surf Coast, where median price per hectare is up a mere 3.5 per cent to \$30,038, according to data from Digital Agriculture Services for the 2019/20 financial year.

Victoria's most expensive small farms can be found on the Mornington Peninsula, where median sale price is \$3.85 million – or \$170,913 per hectare, down more than 26 per cent on the previous year.

Macedon Ranges comes in fourth, and Baw Baw tenth, with real estate figures showing more people are seeking a rural lifestyle away from metropolitan areas on the back of Coronavirus restrictions and lockdowns.



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**6 DARRYL COURT, COWES**



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  - 3 bed/ 2 bath
  - Large undercover entertainment area

**10 GLAMIS ROAD, VENTNOR**



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# Here we go again: lockdown lowdown

During the first COVID-19 lockdown, the Advertiser ran a weekly column with the McLure family of Smiths Beach to see how they were coping in quarantine.

Given stage 3 restrictions have now been reimposed, we again visit the family, who have lived on the island for 16 years. Mum Lisa is a hairdresser at Elements Hair Room in Cowes, and a personal trainer at the YMCA and in her home studio. Dad Tim is a welder and mechanic at an engineering company in Wonthaggi. And then there are the two kids, Angus, 10, in grade four at Cowes Primary and Evie, six, in grade one. Lisa – well known for her upbeat take on life – will again share stories of how the family is getting through the isolation.

“Oh dear, I just got kicked in the head with a Swiss ball.

When we came out of lockdown last time, we decided to start our house renovation, which we’d delayed because of restrictions.

We’ve got a new bathroom and the plasterers are currently working upstairs. So I’ve moved downstairs into my fitness studio with the kids to do home schooling.

But being in a room that is eight metres by two metres with a dog, cat, two kids and a couple of Swiss balls is not going so well right now.

We started the reno when everything opened up.

It didn’t take long once life got back to normal to get busy again.

I didn’t realise how much we cram into life. It was such a contrast.

Every week became busier and busier, not just the reno, but we did dance, footy, swimming, personal training, not just for the kids, but Tim

and me.

Slowly but surely the busy routine crept back in.

We even went to Wilsons Prom in our new van, the weekend before restrictions came in.

Now everything has stopped I’m actually enjoying this time a lot more.

It’s now about seizing the moment.

When it was busy I realised I missed the quiet moments, walking with a friend or swimming with the kids.

Every night at dinner we ask the kids what they loved most about their day and they never say ‘being on the iPad’, but going for a walk as a family or being on the beach.

I think it’s important just to be aware of this.

It’s taught me not to sit around and wait, just do it.

Normally I’d sit on the beach and think it’s too cold to go for a swim



Angus and Evie McLure out on the water at Smiths Beach last week, back to home schooling but enjoying the quiet moments, the joy of living by the beach.

with the kids, but instead I bought a wetsuit and I’m now swimming with them.

No one looks attractive in a wetsuit, but we’re all having a ball.

I may not get another opportunity to go in the water, so let’s do it today.

The kids have never been to Forrest Caves, so we took them for the first time on the weekend and they absolutely loved it.

I’m also coming into this lockdown healthier after doing dry July.

Last time if I had a hard day I’d

have a drink and if I’d had a good day I’d also drink to celebrate and two drinks would turn into four.

But the next day I’d feel sluggish and moody.

Once restrictions eased I got back into my work clothes and they were snug.

So I thought, I can’t do this to myself any more.

Coming off drinking was hard, because it was such a daily habit. It had become a reward.

But having done dry July and now not drinking at all, my energy is through the roof and my anxiety levels are way down.

I wake up feeling so much better, clear headed, not bloated.

I wake up, go for a run and even yesterday I finished the run with a swim, fully clothed, walking up the street dripping.

I would have stripped off naked but it would have been too hard to get dressed wet.

So this time it’s totally different: a new, improved isolation 2.0.

This time round I’m thinking about the future.

When people ask our kids what isolation was like for them, I don’t want them to remember me wrecked.

I want them to say ‘we didn’t see our friends but we had more time with mum and dad, we went on adventures and had fun as a family’.

I want their memories to be good ones.

No matter how much you want to be out of restrictions, we are here and we can’t change it.

So it’s all about what we make of it.

## Testing capacity increased

In the past month, on average more than 900 tests a week have been carried out by Bass Coast Health.

This is a huge increase on several hundred a week earlier in the pandemic.

The capacity of the new drive-through test site in Wonthaggi has been upgraded twice to respond to demand.

The upgrades include an additional lane and better shelter for staff and Bass Coast Health CEO, Jan Child said some processes have been refined.

“There are now two lanes and testing can accommodate people in six cars at once during peak times,” said Ms Child.

“We have had positive feedback and we add resources where we need to.”

She said all medical and Division 1 nursing staff were able to perform the COVID-19 swabs, which meant tests could be done in the emergency department and wards, as well as at the testing clinics.

“There is a core group of staff who are working at both the Urgent Care Centre and the testing tent, but other staff can be quickly brought in as the need arises.”

The rising demand for tests has seen an increase in waiting times, with Ms Child confirming the average waiting time was around one hour.

She said Monash Pathology had increased their processing capacity and generally people received their test results within two to three days.

Ms Child said several factors were influencing the increased demand for tests.

“The testing numbers fluctuate and can be influenced by what is happening in the community that day.

“When social media reports local cases, or when there is a local school or business affected, our numbers naturally rise,” she said.

“There is also an increase based on rules changing, such as testing for all elective surgical patients.”

With DHHS currently reporting three active cases in the region, the BCH Infection Control team has expanded to the equivalent of three full-time staff.

“Our Infection Control Nurse has been the key point of contact for all positive and active cases that have been tested at BCH, and BCH has assisted with identifying and following up with close contacts until the DHHS tracing team is available,” Ms Child said.

“This ensures that all local cases are proac-



The Wonthaggi drive through testing facility has been upgraded to help deal with the 900+ tests being conducted each week.

tively supported and isolated. All communication with positive cases is undertaken in liaison with DHHS who have the primary role of contact tracing.”

Ms Child said the team was also following up people who have had other illnesses such as Influenza and ensuring people are phoned with their test results.

She said the increased demands from the pandemic had significantly increased staff workloads.

“BCH staff have been extremely busy, not just with the preparation for the pandemic where the guidance is changing regularly and most work processes have had to change many times; but with the increased demand – it’s been generally busy.

“The good thing is that people have not stopped coming in for care like we experienced in the first phase, and we have added resources so that staff are coping with the additional workload,” she said.

She said some staff were concerned about their health and the health of their families and the change back to remote learning for schools was an added pressure for staff with families.

“Most are just keen to see a light at the end of this long tunnel and are doing the best they can to support one another.”

Anyone with even the mildest COVID-19 symptoms is urged to get tested and self-isolate until they receive their results.

## Elyse’s lip service

Mandatory face masks may be useful in the battle against COVID-19, but for deaf people who rely on lip-reading they are proving problematic. So manager of the San Remo Hotel Elyse Fisher (pictured) – well known for her community support – has created a lanyard to help the deaf or hearing impaired.

“I am deaf. I cannot lipread through your mask. To communicate with me please be patient and use your mobile phone or pen and paper,” the lanyard reads.

Lanyards are available from San Remo Hotel Thirsty Camel Bottle Shop, as well as their other venue, The Korumburra Middle Hotel.



## All clear at Griffiths Point

No staff or residents at Griffiths Point Lodge in San Remo have tested positive to COVID-19.

Bass Coast Health is keeping a close watch on the facility after a staff member tested positive at their other aged-care facility, Kirrak House in Wonthaggi.

“Griffiths Point Lodge residents and staff are only being tested if they are symptomatic,” said BCH CEO Jan Child.

Restrictions agreed to with residents and staff some weeks ago remain in place.

“Everyone was keen to keep the virus at bay and so we instituted extra cleaning and put on additional staff and we ceased visitors except for exceptional circumstances.

“Staff are having refresher training in donning and doffing PPE and in Infection Prevention and Control practices.”

Communal activities and dining have been reduced and Ms Child said extra diversional therapy staff had been rostered on at Griffiths Point Lodge, “to ensure residents can connect with their loved ones”.

## Take the test

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

Testing is available at:

- Phillip Island Health Hub (24 hours a

day). Call 5951 2100.

• Wonthaggi Hospital drive through testing service is available 10am-5pm, 7 days a week.

You can also book a test at Wonthaggi Medical Centre, Monday to Friday (Ph: 0492 036 568 or [www.hotdoc.com.au/medical-centres/wonthaggi-VIC-3995/wonthaggi-respiratory-clinic/doctors](http://www.hotdoc.com.au/medical-centres/wonthaggi-VIC-3995/wonthaggi-respiratory-clinic/doctors)).

People should phone their doctor or the Coronavirus hotline on 1800 675 398 if their symptoms get worse.

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## Stop Ventnor development

I write to strongly object to the proposed development at 46 McHaffies Lane, Ventnor. I was born and raised on Phillip Island and for the past almost 70 years have watched in dismay as our environment is carved up for tourism and development. I now live in Ventnor where I enjoy the diversity of fauna and flora that remain. Wallabies abound in the coastal bushland. Mutton birds continue to arrive and depart in their ancient migratory patterns. A large flock of yellow tailed black cockatoos are a regular sighting. Surely these and other wildlife deserve some respite from the traffic, the night lights and the noise that must accompany development. I fear Phillip Island nature park is fast becoming Phillip Island Tourist Village.

Liz Jones, Ventnor

## Vietnam Veterans

Each year on August 18, Vietnam Veterans' Day and the anniversary of the Battle of Long Tan, Australians pause to reflect on the service and sacrifice of those who served during the Vietnam War.

The first Australian troops from the Australian Army Training Team Vietnam arrived in 1962 and over the course of the war around 60,000 Australians served there, with our involvement ending with the Royal Australian Air Force flying humanitarian missions and evacuating embassy staff in April, 1975. Tragically, 521 Australians died and more than 3,000 were wounded.

On 18 August 1966 Australian soldiers fought in one of their fiercest battles during the entire Vietnam War, the Battle of Long Tan, a brutal action that saw 18 Australians killed and 25 wounded.

As we commemorate the service and sacrifice of those who served and died in Vietnam, it is important to acknowledge that many Vietnam veterans were deeply affected by their service. Vietnam veterans were instrumental in establishing the Vietnam Veterans' Counselling Service, now known as Open Arms. This service has been providing mental health and support services for Australian veterans and their families every year since 1982 and is their enduring legacy.

All Vietnam veterans can be proud that Open Arms supported more than 30,000 veterans and their family members last year and that it has made a life-changing difference to countless veterans and their families and I know it will continue to do so into the future.

Vietnam veterans also set up the Long Tan Bursary, a program that pro-

vides education support to the children and grandchildren of Vietnam veterans, helping them gain the skills and qualifications needed to pursue their chosen career. Applications for the 2021 Bursary are now open and eligible descendants of our Vietnam veterans can apply online at [avcat.org.au/scholarships/](http://avcat.org.au/scholarships/).

As a nation, I encourage all Australians to acknowledge and honour the Vietnam veterans who gave so much in the service of our country, as well as recognise the rich contribution Vietnam veterans continue to make to our community.

Let's not forget.

Darren Chester  
Minister for Veterans' Affairs  
Minister for Defence Personnel

*Open Arms — Veterans & Families Counselling provides free and confidential support for current and ex-serving ADF personnel and their families. Help is available 24/7 on 1800 011 046 (international: +61 1800 011 046 or +61 8 8241 4546) or visit [www.OpenArms.gov.au](http://www.OpenArms.gov.au)*

## Why I can't join the Phillip Island Dog Owners Association

I love dogs, but I am writing to challenge the Phillip Island Dog Owners Association's Facebook post assertion - 'our rights to our beaches'.

When the group was proposed, I was full of hope about the group working with Council to find a solution that respected the seasonal breeding of wildlife while also allowing dogs and owners on the beach. However, once the group was formed, I realised that it was taking an antagonistic approach, as reflected in its banner, 'I own a dog and I vote'.

This mantra sits uncomfortably with the American National Rifle Association's banner, 'I own a gun and I vote'. Basically, it speaks of a one-sided, no compromise stance.

Nobody has explicit rights to any public area; they are shared spaces and this community right needs to be respected.

I have been walking along this beach (Ventnor) with a dog since 1971. Then, there was me, my dog and a couple of dalmatians owned by the potter, Eric Juckert. Then, there were very few houses, mostly paddocks, hardly any people.

Fast forward to 2020, many more houses and new estates, many more people, less space for wildlife, and many more pets.

Phillip Island is unique, we need to respect and protect what makes it special alongside the more intensive urban development from which we have

all benefitted in some way through employment, small businesses, services like doctors, cafes and so on. But Phillip Island is a finite space and its expansion needs to be balanced, even on beaches.

We can't go back to 'good old days', but we can work cooperatively and respectfully to preserve a place for all, including wildlife and dogs. We owe it to the kids.

I ask the Phillip Island Dog Owners Association to think about their approach of 'us or them'.

Afterall, 'cooperation makes it happen.' I learned this from Sesame Street.  
Tricia O'Brien, Ventnor

## Follow the guidelines

People are indeed strange, and incredibly selfish at times!

In this second wave of Covid-19 contamination and rapid community transmission, and the imposition of Stages 3 and 4 lockdown, we have seen just how easily and quickly the virus can spread and the havoc that it can wreak. That being the case, how is it that despite all of the media coverage, people still flagrantly disregard the advice from the Victorian Premier and Chief Medical Officer?

Here on the island we are seeing way too many Melbournians camped in their weekenders. The current government second wave directions are that we must all stay in our own principal/permanent residence. It might have been ok before this second wave to designate a weekender as a principal place of residence, but that does not comply with the current situation. The island has a high percentage of permanent residents in the vulnerable age group, and while some might understand why people might want to get out of Melbourne, it is not ok to risk the health and wellbeing of others. Perhaps the local police should increase their patrols and send these people back to their real homes?

It has also been obvious since the imposition of Stage 3 lockdown last week that some islanders think it is ok to continue to visit each other in their homes for a chat and a cuppa, often without bothering to mask up! This is also not in line with the current restrictions. Presumably these individuals think we are safe here, but as we have seen in NZ, and in the past week in three regional Victorian cities, the situation can change quickly, and dramatically for the worse.

I do not want to contract the virus, and I would not want anyone else in our tight-knit community to needlessly suffer either. It would be very difficult

for all of us if things were to get out of hand, and we were to find ourselves under Stage 4 lockdown. Let us all do the right thing!

Jeff Bond, Cowes

## AGL gas report fears

The recent release of over 10,000 pages in documents for the AGL and APA gas import jetty and pipeline project have confirmed the fears of local residents.

The Environment Effects Statement (EES) details the construction and operational impacts of the gas project on Western Port Bay, the 57km pipeline corridor and surrounding communities.

Local resident concerns include:

- Over 450 million litres of cold, chlorinated wastewater would be discharged into Western Port Bay every day of operation

- Various air emissions, odour, noise and artificial light pollution would impact on Crib Point and French Island residents

- Formaldehyde concentrations exceeded the design criteria
- 900 trucks per year on local roads to provide liquid nitrogen to the gas facility

- A 640 metre buffer zone either side of the proposed 57km gas pipeline could impact landowners, residents and businesses

Mornington Peninsula Shire Council and Cardinia Council are due to vote on their position on the AGL gas project.

I hope all residents and visitors around Western Port Bay will send their thoughts and concerns to the Victorian Government.

Public submissions close at 11:59pm on Wednesday, August 26 via the Engage Victoria website: <https://engage.vic.gov.au/crib-point-IAC>

Dale Stohr, Crib Point

## Thanks to Council

The Spicy Duck would like to extend its appreciation to Council after successfully receiving a grant as part of the Business and Community Resilience Grants Program. It is an innovative approach to supporting local business during these times.

We have been able to use the grant to develop an exciting and vibrant online presence, starting with our new website. This online presence will help us engage with customers safely and effectively during these unpredictable times. We were able to employ local web designer George Pappas who developed a very engaging and user-friendly website and social media presence. For those interested in viewing

the website, [www.thespicyduck.com](http://www.thespicyduck.com).

Staff and Management - The Spicy Duck

## Gas last gasp

"Gas will never be cheap again" says Tim Forcey, EssoBHP Bass Strait engineer, for 2000-2010. Main revenue always came from oil, not gas, which actually hinders oil flow. In big hurry, to get rid of big volume, needing pipeline to Melbourne, cheap price made gas dump possible. Now, as usual, to satisfy demand, more supply makes price fall. Since 2015, supply has tripled but so too have prices.

So what? Why should we care? Petrochemical companies don't retain ownership of gas fields. They make money getting them going but then get rid, to get money for more projects. So who buys? For such 40-year, modest earning, safe investment, buyers are mostly superannuation companies, your money. If you care, check fossil rating online, for your super company, with organisations like Market Forces, hoping you're already divested.

Until COVID finished them, contractors were drilling wells like Ponzi scheme, to prop up failed yields. Bankruptcies now declared, \$135 Billion for USA and \$20 Billion for Queensland. While crazy LNG prices can't make ends meet for exports, we pay rip off prices for gas (without cost to convert LNG), nearly twice as high, as paid in Japan (for "our" gas), to make foreign owned companies profitable.

Gas Transition fuel, to nowhere, no way. How can we not care when there's less for health, education, welfare, even infrastructure, because such big taxpayer bucks slithered to foreign fossil fuel companies?

About emissions, Australia's are still rising. In comparison UK declined, since 1973, now down 42 per cent on 1990 levels. Simultaneously economic growth is 72 per cent rising to challenge of annual targets set in law. UK and EU now finally getting serious about protection, from unfair competition, from countries without emissions policy. Answer is BCA (Border Carbon Adjustment) a tariff, making imports from Australia more expensive.

Gas consumption needs to reduce, drastically. It's harder to find. Gas contains more and more carbon dioxide, filtered, then blown off to atmosphere, big time, disguised by weasel words "fugitives" and "leakage". Last year, revenue for nearest competitor, Qatar, was \$26 Billion while ours was \$1.15 Billion. So how about we stop giving LNG away?

Bernie McComb, Cowes

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DEATHS

**GUY, Vicki Lorraine:**  
To my brave cousin Vicki. Great company, Great friend. Lover of animals and family. Miss you my little friend.  
Ellen Grigg, Danni, Daine, Phoebe and Jed.



**Annabell Freeman** passed away peacefully at 11.30 pm on Friday the 14th August 2020 at Banfields Aged Care in the presence of her daughter and granddaughter. Beloved and devoted wife of Tony Freeman (deceased) loved and cherished mother of Heatherley and her partner Richard and treasured grandma to Dylan and Sophie and their partners Jess and Jed. She was a true English rose. RIP with Tony forever. Our thanks and appreciation goes out to all of her Banfields family for their loving care during her 7 years there.

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Good condition, not used much, under 2 years old. \$1,500, Mob: 0428 454 338'.

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**NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS:** Weekly meetings Bass Coast Shire: Cowes - Sunday 5-6pm, St Philip's Church (opp. Coles); Wonthaggi - Friday 11am, Salvation Army Hall (149 McKenzie St.). Phone 1300 652 820 or visit na.org.au

PUBLIC NOTICES

  
**Notice is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting will be held on September 10th 2020 at 5.30pm via Zoom.**  
The business of the Annual General Meeting shall be:  
1) an update on the affairs of the group,  
2) conducting elections for committee,  
3) voting on special resolutions (if required),  
4) announcement of Life Membership(s) if awarded.  
Conducting an AGM via Zoom during a pandemic is a new and different situation. This AGM will be limited to members only and require that attendees pre-register by the 7th Sept to enable us to track attendance and voting automatically.  
After pre-registration, members will then be sent a unique invitation to the meeting.  
Pre-registration with your name and email, can be performed via: <https://us02web.zoom.us/join/register/tZMpcuQrTkiHtGrSfVSO6axlcWLjdEoj2wh>.  
Memberships may be renewed via our website.

  
**NOTICE OF AGM**  
7 September 2020  
9.30am  
Virtual Meeting  
For more information and to register your attendance visit:  
[www.pirsl.com.au](http://www.pirsl.com.au)

**1 in 5 people in Australia will experience depression.**  
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Initiative of Phillip Island Masonic Lodge



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

CHURCH NOTICES

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

**UNITING CHURCH:**  
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[www.facebook.com/pages/St-Johns-Uniting-Church/828979940479969](http://www.facebook.com/pages/St-Johns-Uniting-Church/828979940479969)

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

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

  
*The Annual General Meeting of Island Voice will be held on Aug 28th 2020 at 6pm via Zoom.*  
The business of the Annual General Meeting shall be:  
1) an update on the affairs of the group,  
2) conducting elections for committee,  
3) voting on special resolutions (if required).  
Conducting an AGM via Zoom during a pandemic is a whole new situation. It will require that attendees pre-register, with your name and email, before the event. Members will then be sent a unique invitation to the meeting. These will enable us to track of attendance and voting.  
Details of pre-registration will be provided via Island Voice's FaceBook page.

  
Expressions of interest are invited for the following positions at Bass Valley Primary School to begin on 5th October 2020:  
**1. SCHOOL CLEANER:**  
Applicants must be accredited with DETclean  
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Quotes will close on Monday 7th September.

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Aunt Fay Stewart-Muir will talk with Lisa Kennedy and Laura Brearley about creative collaborations at an online session on August 25.

Online conversations

Phillip Island Story Gatherers presents another online conversation on Tuesday, August 25 at 7.30pm. The session – "Creative Collaborations and Connection to Country" – is the latest in a series of online sessions presented by the group, since the decision was made to cancel this year's literary festival. The conversion features Aunt Fay Stewart-Muir, Lisa Kennedy and Laura Brearley. The three women will talk about creative collaborations, storytelling and connection to Country, family and community.  
Aunt Fay Stewart-Muir is a Traditional Custodian of Boon Wurrung Country and celebrated author. Lisa Kennedy is a Trawlwoolway storyteller and artist and a descendant of Woretmoetyenner from North East Tasmania. Dr Laura Brearley is a creative researcher and intercultural arts specialist who established Koori Cohorts of Researchers at RMIT, Monash and Federation University. Tickets are \$10 per person and are limited, so book your online place via <https://www.trybooking.com/BKVVH> or visit [www.the-island-story-gatherers.com](http://www.the-island-story-gatherers.com) for more details.



Dr Laura Brearley is part of an online session presented by Phillip Island Story Gatherers on August 25 on creative collaborations

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# PICAL's Isolation Nights:

## Free online community connection sessions

PICAL is hosting free online community connection sessions to help people cope with the impact of the latest lockdown.

Maintaining community connection is hard during a pandemic when we all must stay at home to save lives.

"We've found this second wave has been particularly hard on our local community" said Greg Thompson, PICAL's Centre Manager.

"We had just started to reintroduce our group activities here at PICAL before the Stage 3 restrictions were re-imposed. Social connections were being re-established when we were once again forced back into isolation. We wanted to find a way for people to maintain a sense of community whilst staying safe at home.

"It seems like every time we turn on our TVs or devices at the moment, the messages we are receiving are very upsetting. We wanted to give people an opportunity and a reason to get together safely somehow, and talk about some the positive ways we can all get

through this pandemic together."

That's when PICAL's Isolation Nights started to take shape.

This online presentation series of interesting local topics delivered via Zoom kicked off last Monday with "The Country Dietician" Christopher Duff, thanks to South Coast Primary & Community Partnership (PCP).

The PCP work together with the Bass Coast and South Gippsland communities to achieve healthy lifestyles. Chris spoke about ways to support our immune systems during COVID-19 and busted some of the popular food related Covid myths.

The series continues on Monday August 24, with Lois Gaskin from the much loved "Turn the Page" bookstore in Cowes.

Lois will help us choose our next best isolation reads that are sure to provide us with some much-needed escapism.



Linda Wilson from Elite Consulting is one of the guest speakers for Isolation Night - a series of community connection sessions being hosted by PICAL.

The third speaker is Linda Wilson from Elite Counselling and Consulting.

"All sessions are between 30-45 minutes long and delivered free online via Zoom at 7.30pm. Participants will need to have an internet connection and have downloaded the free Zoom application.

"We understand not everyone will have downloaded Zoom or know how to use it" said Wendy.

"We encourage anyone who wants to be involved to reach out to us at the centre and we can guide you through it."

PICAL is very thankful to all the presenters who gave their time to the local community so willingly.

"We hope that by fostering and encouraging local connections, our community will not lose the incredible spirit that always been a part of our Island home," said Greg.

"Strong community support is what's going to see us through the other side of this pandemic ... that and staying physically apart."

To register for a session head to [www.trybooking.com/eventlist/pical](http://www.trybooking.com/eventlist/pical)

## Around the Bay

WITH JIM'S BAIT AND TACKLE

There are plenty of people that live in this area that travel every day to Melbourne metro to work but with the current lockdowns in Melbourne they are unable to work, so are looking for ways to pass the time of day with many heading out fishing.

The best thing is you can grab some gear and head down to the beach or jetty without it costing you a fortune and possibly supplement your weekly shop with a few feeds of fish.

Don't forget with 90 per cent of your fishing, spending lots of money won't change your success but spending a little in the right places could improve your chances dramatically.

No point having a thousand-dollar rod and reel and then using a hook that you have trouble pushing through your bait because it is so blunt.

Money is tight and with future earnings uncertain for many, make sure you are spending it on the gear that will help you the most, not the gear that makes you look like you know what you are doing. We have found over the last month or more an increasing number of customers telling us, "we would normally buy our gear online but thought we would support the locals during this time".

This is a comment we have been hearing from other businesses around the area and it is very pleasing to get that support from our customers. Let's hope it continues well after all this is over.

Apart from everything else that is happening the excellent weather we are having is getting a lot more people than normal out fishing for this time of the year.

Because there is more out fishing, naturally we are getting more reports.

The reports are coming from all over the place and again I think because of the weather we have seen plenty of days where all the carparks at the boat ramp are full.

There have been a lot of kids out fishing with their parents as well, with one young customer telling us it is part of his schooling, outdoor education!

We have had plenty of people in taking up fishing for the first time or finally taking up fishing after moving here for a lifestyle years ago, but work had still been getting in the way.

There is often good that comes out of bad and if the good is people are actually starting to enjoy their surroundings, instead of just driving past them, it can only be a good thing for the future.

Sometimes you have a perfect day out fishing when a plan comes together, generally you don't have too many in your fishing history, luck also plays a big part.

Good customer Steve headed out Saturday with a plan to catch a snapper.

Heading into Cleeland Bight first thing looking for calamari for some fresh bait he managed to find a couple

of quality ones then headed to look for a snapper.

Thirty minutes after sending us a photo of the calamari he had moved up the bay and a photo of the sounder with a couple of quality arches. Ten minutes later the first snapper, 20 minutes after that three quality snapper in the esky and heading home.

We had a couple of other reports of snapper from along the channel beside French Island, but those reports were of only one fish each.

We were told of bigger snapper caught further up off spit point area but didn't actually see them.

Whiting reports haven't been anything special for the last couple of weeks with very few reports or reports of only one or two fish.

We did see a couple of bags into double figures with no reason why or how with far more zeros from those looking for them.

Some excellent quality calamari were reported but numbers and consistency aren't quite there as yet, but the signs are more promising than they have been.

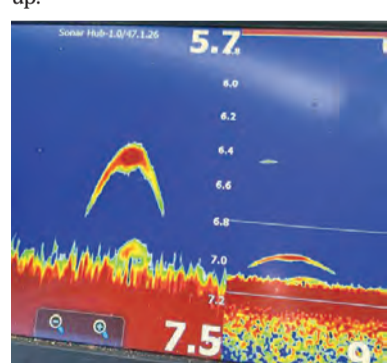
The jetties have been very quiet and a little frustrating with perfect conditions at times for calamari but for no success.

The beaches at Ventnor and Cleeland Bight have been the best for the land-based anglers with mixed sizes of calamari showing up now.

The boats and kayaks, as normal is where the best reports came from and the usual places, Cleeland Bight, Reef Island and off Cowes but the best of the calamari reports came from offshore in the deep water where some 4kg models showed up.



Everybody heads out with a plan and sometimes it all comes together as Steve found out Saturday. First you catch the fresh bait.



Then you find the fish with the sounder.



The final result is - if it's your day you catch your fish.



San Remo IGA is now offering online shopping with free home delivery. Staff members Sally Sterling, Corey Smith, Indi Bow and Bridget Turner alongside the store's delivery van.

## San Remo IGA goes online

San Remo IGA has launched online shopping, to help customers cope with the ongoing COVID-19 restrictions.

Store Manager Shayne Crawford said the store had always offered home delivery, but the service had ramped up since the first lockdown earlier this year.

Before the pandemic, the free weekly delivery averaged around 20 deliveries. That number is now closer to 160, with customers emailing or ringing through their orders.

The new online store will make it even easier. Shayne said delivery for online orders was usually the same day or within 24 hours. Once an order is placed online, customers get a call from one of the IGA team, to run through any issues with out-of-stock items or product substitutions and to organise payment.

"We are processing payments over the phone - keeping a bit of a personal touch," Shayne said.

Customers could also opt to click and collect, with orders usually ready within an hour.

Three dedicated click and collect car spaces have been set up.

"You don't even need to get out of the car," Shayne said.

"Our staff will come and put your order into the back of your car."

He said all home deliveries were contactless as well, with the delivery drivers tooting the horn to let customers know when their delivery has been left at the door.

### No limits

Unlike the first lockdown, Shayne said there were no restrictions or limits on products in-store, nor any problems with maintaining stock.

"The first time, no one was prepared and people were hoarding a bit," Shayne said.

"There were vanloads coming from Melbourne and clearing us out. But now it's just locals and it's definitely more manageable."

He said because the store used a range of local suppliers, it wasn't experiencing the stock shortages on products like chicken and vegetables

reported in Melbourne.

But there were some changes in people's buying patterns.

"In the first lockdown, we sold a lot of staples - rice, pasta, flour, pasta sauce - the things you can keep in your cupboard for months," Shayne said.

"A lot more people are obviously baking now, and we are selling a few more pregnancy tests than usual!"

He said the store was always happy to take customer requests and get things in. The focus on stocking local products continued.

"We have plenty of local cheeses, as well as local ice cream, milk, eggs, oil and honey. We're even now stocking Beand coffee.

"We try to support the local producers and that's a point of difference from the big supermarket chains. They don't have the ability to buy from small suppliers."

And while winter is normally the store's quietest time of year, Shayne said business had been very consistent.

"It has been a really busy six months and we've had to increase staff levels. The only week that was quieter than last year was the Easter weekend."

He said customers were adjusting well to the latest restrictions and everyone was wearing masks and observing the social distancing requirements.

### Delivery days

The store is now offering daily deliveries Monday to Friday with the San Remo Fishermen's Co-op offering their van to help with the growing demand for deliveries.

Click and collect is available Monday to Saturday.

Home delivery and the new online store have been embraced by customers.

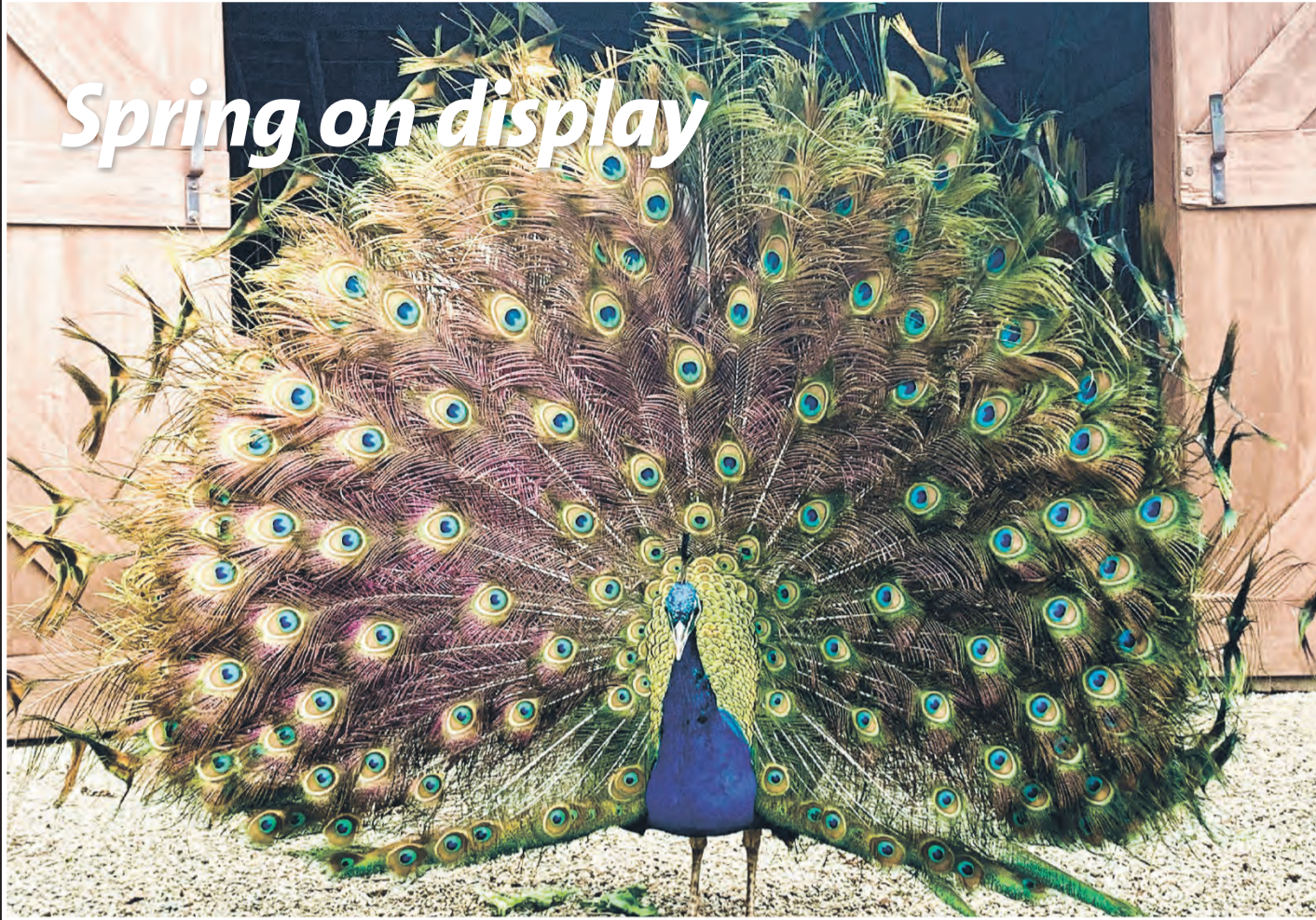
"Traditionally it was our older customers who used the free home delivery service," said Shayne.

"But now we're seeing a lot of the young generation using it. Our biggest group of customers is in the 20 to 45-year-old bracket.

"I think a lot of mum's who are home-schooling are using online delivery. It takes away one stress of their day."

Shop online at: [sanremoiga.com.au](http://sanremoiga.com.au)

# Spring on display



As the old saying goes – “if you’ve got it, flaunt it!”. The latest lockdown didn’t stop this Churchill Island peacock strutting his stuff. “With all the heaviness of Covid, it’s nice to reflect and appreciate just where we live,” said photographer Katrina Lawrence. “The wildlife are thriving and it’s beautiful to watch.”

## Ventnor farm plans cooperative, classes

A food cooperative, cooking classes and beekeeping workshops are among the projects proposed for a Ventnor farm.

Rommy and Katie Lamaro run Five Acre farm on McHaffies Lane in Ventnor, currently seeking a permit through Bass Coast Shire to create an event space inside an existing shed.

“Our ideas on how we use this space are vast with a focus on cooking classes, fermenting and preserving foods, regenerative farming collaboratives, bee keeping workshops and bespoke events at some stage,” Katie said.

“We recently started conversations with a group of like-minded people to discuss a food cooperative platform where Bass Coast locals can come together, learn and share knowledge, swap, buy and sell homegrown food and increase awareness around the importance of local produce.

“We see this venture as even more critical given the current climate and the need to localise our food system.”

The Lamaros – who have three children aged 12, 6 and 4 – moved to the five acre property more than two years ago and have called the island home for eight years.

The family have since transformed the property, planting an orchard with more than 90 fruit and nut trees, an extensive vegetable garden, as well as hundreds of native plants.

Katie has set up a commercial kitchen to run her business The Pantry Phillip Island, making grazing platters and take away boxes, as well as grazing tables for weddings and events.

“We have chickens, a goat, sheep and highland cows that



The Lamaro family have transformed the Ventnor farm, planting an orchard with more than 90 fruit and nut trees, an extensive vegetable garden, as well as hundreds of native plants, where they also run The Pantry Phillip Island. Photo: Claire Davie, Doorstep Documentary.

are beautiful additions to the farm, but all play a role in creating compost using permaculture practices,” she said.

When Rommy and Katie took over the property, it had two rundown dwellings built in the 70s and old shedding.

The dwellings have been renovated, with the second run as a farmstay since Easter 2019.

“Obviously Covid-19 has had a great impact as the farmstay has been closed since mid-March with a small window of a few regional visitors prior to our second wave resulting in the current lockdown.”

In addition, the Lamaros have started construction of three cabins, with sustainable features including a six star energy rating, solar electricity production, energy efficient appliances, non-toxic building materials and the installation of rain water tanks servicing toilets and

gardens, with minimal building waste during construction.

The property also features a 9.5kw solar system that provides power for both dwellings and a worm farm septic system.

Rainwater tanks with 105,000 litre capacity fill all animal troughs, irrigates the vegetable gardens, orchard and plantings.

The property is one of the most historic on Phillip Island, a sheep run for early settlers the McHaffie brothers.

The land was also one of the first artificial insemination farms in Australia.

The planning permit, currently open for public comment, is for a place of assembly for up to 60 people, open to 11pm with plans for indoor and outdoor live music, and a total of 18 car parks.

Details: [www.fiveacres.com.au/](http://www.fiveacres.com.au/), [thepantryphillipisland.com.au/](http://thepantryphillipisland.com.au/) or Instagram [fiveacres\\_phillipisland](https://www.instagram.com/fiveacres_phillipisland)



Jordan Crugnale MP pictured with Steve Parker and his artwork.

## Dig in for art

Member for Bass, Jordan Crugnale hopes local artists can lend their creative talents to create unique pieces of art to be gifted to the community.

For this project, Ms Crugnale is seeking five artists, each to be granted \$500, to paint one shovel each for significant milestone events across the Bass Electorate.

The shovels will be used for sod turns at the beginning of infrastructure works, and gifted to the community to commemorate the events. Each artist will be provided a theme for the shovel.

“The beginning of a public infrastructure project, such as a hospital upgrade, community facility or a new school, is an important moment and often the result of a great deal of hard work by community members,” said Ms Crugnale.

“I want to bring a story, spirit and colour to these events, showcase local creatives, and celebrate that our community is at the heart of every project.”

Ms Crugnale asks artists to please send an EOI along with examples of their work by August 31. All artists must reside in the Bass Electorate.

All queries and submissions can be directed to [jordan.crugnale@parliament.vic.gov.au](mailto:jordan.crugnale@parliament.vic.gov.au)

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