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Wednesday, February 19, 2025

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Sights like this will be a thing of the past, with the government decision to close the Fisheries Victoria office in Cowes, with four local staff being told their roles will be terminated. Five offices will be closed and 27 officers made redundant. Photo courtesy of Victorian Fisheries Authority.

Fisheries facing the chop

FISHING

Members of the fishing industry across Westernport and Port Phillip bays are outraged over a decision by the State Government to close five fisheries offices and terminate 27 staff.

There has been no official announcement, but staff in the Cowes office confirmed they were told last Thursday all four staff members would lose their jobs.

The Cowes office will be closed, and the building sold. It's

understood local patrol boats will also be sold off.

The Advertiser also understands there will be nine new positions created for Fisheries Engagement Officers, with three new offices opened, including one in Tooradin.

The existing staff will be able to apply for one of the nine new roles.

The reaction from the fishing community has been swift and negative.

In less than two days, a peti-

tion calling for the decision to be reversed attracted 2740 signatures.

On Facebook one angry fisherman described the decision as "the single largest act of environmental vandalism in the state of Victoria".

Local resident Kevin Brown was the Victorian Chief Fisheries Officer before he retired, and worked in the industry for more than four decades.

He ran all of the Fisheries compliance in Victoria and said

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he is "absolutely staggered" by the decision.

He's called on the fishing community to unite and oppose the closures, which he understands will be rolled out over the next five weeks.

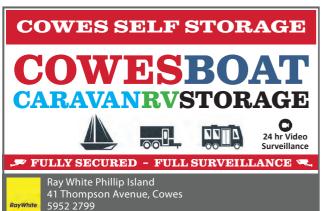
Kevin said the proposed changes would wreck "a robust compliance system" and were devastating for the central region, which includes Western Port and Port Phillip bays and the strip of coastline adjacent to them.

"In my view, the authority is turning its back on its responsibilities to ensure the ongoing viability of the natural resources under its direct control," he said.

A spokesperson for the Victorian Fisheries Authority (VFA) told the Advertiser "going forward we will be more focused on education and engaging the community with fishing".

"Some workforce changes have been proposed to reflect this," they said.

Continued page 11





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Liberal party candidate for Monash, Mary Aldred, is already hard at work campaigning and interacting with island locals last week, in preparation for the upcoming federal election.

Mary Aldred hits the streets

ELECTION

Liberal party candidate for Monash, Mary Aldred, is already hard at work campaigning and interacting with island locals in preparation for the upcoming federal election. Last Wednesday Mary was outside Coles with a team of volunteers, asking voters what mattered to them.

"Lots of people have stopped to chat," said Mary.
"I've heard a really

strong mood for change

at a national level. Every-

and the economy.

"Then at a local level I'm having some great conversations about how we need to fix the roads, invest in better healthcare, and then issues local to the island like the coastal inundation at Silverleaves and the Phillip Island Recreation Hub, which I'm fighting to get."

Earlier that morning Mary met with Cheryl Owens of the Phillip Island Bass Coast Dog Owners Association, who

one is raising cost of living has been co-ordinating a long-sustained campaign for more dog parks across Bass Coast.

"As someone who's a proud dog owner themselves, it's really important that dog owners on the island have proper spaces to exercise their dogs," Mary said.

Cheryl Owens said she is "impressed with the wonderful, articulate, informed women we have running in our electorate and the hard work they are putting in.'

Bandicoot roadkill deaths mount

WILDLIFE

28

Motorists have been urged to be extra vigilant on roads, with a gruesome discovery of a dead bandicoot on the Cowes-Rhyll Road this month.

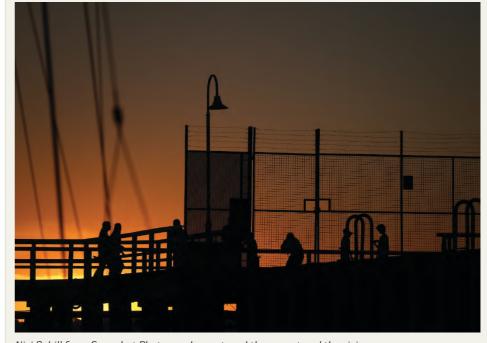
The find shows the threatened species is spreading widely across Phillip Island, from their original release here at locations on Churchill Island and the Summerland Peninsula.

Scientists released 67 eastern barred bandicoots on to Phillip Island in 2017, after they were declared extinct in the wild on mainland Australia in 2013.

The dead bandicoot was found at the eastern end of the Cowes-Rhyll Road, suggesting it had worked its way through Rhyll and was heading to Cowes.

Phillip Island Nature Parks has reiterated calls for motorists to be on the lookout for the Eastern barred bandicoots looking for movement and eye-shine on the verges".

As reported, last year Wildlife Victoria responded to more than 1300 sick, injured and orphaned wildlife - the vast majority roadkill - on Phillip Island, across 120 species.



Nici Cahill from Snapshot Photography captured the sunset and the rising supermoon on Wednesday February 12, at the San Remo Pier. A supermoon is a full moon that occurs when the moon's orbit is closest to Earth, so the moon is larger and brighter than other full moons.









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DAIKIN



From Monday February 24 until early March lane closures will take place between 7pm and 5am, Sunday to Thursday, as the Department of Transport installs sensors to monitor the structural health and condition of the Phillip Island bridge.

Real-time sensors to monitor bridge health

INFRASTRUCTURE

The Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) is installing sensors on the Phillip Island San Remo Bridge from Monday February 24 until early March.

The data collected from the sensors will allow the department to monitor the bridge's structural condition and performance in real-time and comes after a detailed \$1.3 million inspection of the bridge, which included underwater divers, was completed last year.

The DTP is waiting on a final report from SMEC Australia, a global leader in major transport infrastructure projects, who undertook the Level 3 inspections. The report will then be reviewed and used to inform the ongoing maintenance strategy to ensure the bridge remains "safe and reliable".

"We know how important the Phillip Island San Remo bridge is to the local community, which is why we've recently undertaken inspections to inform our ongoing maintenance strategy," a DTP spokesperson

Not only is the bridge the only way on-and-off the island for vehicles, recently refurbished pipes underneath the bridge also carry the island's primary source of potable (drinking) water and sewerage from the surrounding region.

"Sensors which will help us to continue assessing the bridge's structural condition and performance will be installed over the coming weeks," the spokesperson said.

The sensor installation will also include the placement of a low-resolution video camera on the San Remo side of the bridge to provide data on the types of vehicles that are using the

The DTP said individuals will not be able to be identified by the video recordings, which are not for enforcement purposes, and are retained only for a limited period.

To install the sensors, a Bridge Inspection Unit will access the sides and undersides of the bridge.

Works will take place at night between 7pm and 5am to minimise traffic disruptions, with a lane closure and a reduced 40km/h speed limit. There will be no lane closures on Friday or Saturday nights.

Ambulance response times lag to decade low

HEALTH

Ambulance Victoria (AV) response times to Code 1 emergency calls in Bass Coast have hit their highest quarterly average in over a decade.

Between October 1 and December 31 last year, paramedics in Bass Coast responded to 781 "lights and sirens" emergencies. The average time elapsed from the initial emergency call to AV arriving on the scene was 17:46 minutes over two minutes higher than the state average.

Only 53.9 per cent of Code 1 response times in Bass Coast met AV's target of under 15 minutes, a five per cent drop from the same period in 2023.

For Code 2 incidents, which are acute and time sensitive but do not require a lights and sirens response, the average response time was 46:15 for 577 incidents.

Compared other Gippsland councils, Bass Coast had the equal third best response percentage (Code 1 calls responded to in less than 15 minutes) alongside Wellington (53.9 per cent). Latrobe saw 74.5 per cent of ambulances responds to Code 1 incidents in less than 15 minutes, and Baw Baw 62.5 per cent.

East Gippsland and South Gippsland had the lowest results for the percentage of Code 1 calls responded to in under 15 minutes, with the average ambulance wait time in both shires well above 18 minutes.

Across the entire Gippsland region, 6130 Code 1 cases were responded to between October and December.

"More work to do"

Gippsland Regional Director Paul James acknowledged "there is more work to do."

"AV continues to work with hospitals to promptly transfer patients and ensure all Victorians receive the right care in the right time," the Director

'Ramping', which refers to when paramedics transfer patients from the ambulance to the hospital, has been a widespread problem across the state in recent years. On occa-



Ambulance Victoria (AV) response times to Code 1 emergency calls in Bass Coast have hit their highest quarterly average in over a decade, with local response time over two minutes higher than the state

sions where hospital beds are full, paramedics are forced to stay with their patients, effectively taking their vehicle off the road.

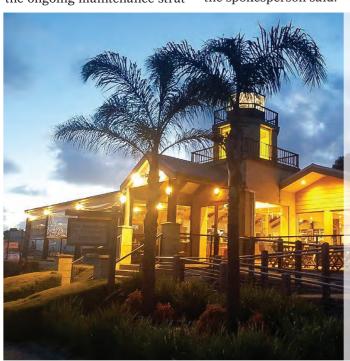
A senior minister recently described ramping as one of the biggest issues plaguing Victoria's health system.

In the wake of the newly released response times, Health Minister Mary-Anne Taylor announced a suite of new patient transfer standards that will be rolled out across Victoria's busiest health services. It is currently unclear whether the changes will be implemented at hospitals across Gippsland.

Mr James encouraged Victorians to do their part to ensure AV resources were available for patients most in need.

"In less urgent cases, there are many options people can access when they need timely medical care, and health advice all day every day - but not an emergency ambulance or calling Triple Zero (000)," Mr James said.

This includes the Victorian Virtual Emergency Department (VVED), Urgent Care Clinics and other options such as your GP or pharmacist, or Nurse-On-Call on 1300 60 60 24.



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It's a buyer's market

REAL ESTATE

San Remo has the unenviable title of having regional Victoria's second highest fall in real estate prices in 2024.

According to CoreLogic, the biggest fall in the 12 months to December 2024 was in Venus Bay in south-west Gippsland, where the median house value fell 13.8 per cent or more than \$81,000 to a median of \$511,000.

Coming in second was San Remo, which fell 11.6 per cent or \$100,000, to a median of about \$765,000.

San Remo was followed by four suburbs in the greater Ballarat area, which variously dropped 10 to 11 per cent.

A CoreLogic spokesperson said the drop was due to the rising cost of living, higher interest rates, and plentiful supply of homes for sale.

"There's a lot more properties on the market relative to the sales that are happening. So, in a pure supply-demand sense, the buyer currently has a lot more



San Remo has the unenviable title of having regional Victoria's second highest fall in real estate prices in 2024.

negotiating power to work down asking prices and values," the spokesperson said.

Meanwhile, the PropTrack Home Price Index found home prices in regional Victoria fell 0.15 per cent in January, to sit 2.28 per cent lower year-on-year,

the only regional market to kick off the new year in decline.

However, PropTrack found since the pandemic onset in March 2020, home price growth in regional Victoria (+38.1 per cent) has outperformed that of Melbourne (+13.2 per cent).



Cardell Accountants welcomes Michaela Salvato (second from left), here with Jason Kennedy, Lyndal McKenzie and Marcus Bond. Absent partner - Zachariah Fowler.

Skills Minister visits Bass Coast

EDUCATION

Last week, Minister for Skills and Training, Gayle Tierney MP visited Wonthaggi.

Member for Bass, Jordan Crugnale described the visit as invaluable."

"We discussed the future skills needs of the region with Bass Coast Health, Bass Coast College and the CEO's of TAFE Gippsland and Chisholm Institute," Ms Crugnale said.

"There are still some challenges and I will continue to work with the school, TAFEs and industry and of course both the Minister for Skills and Training and the Minister for Education to ensure our skills needs are met and we have the course offerings and career pathways that lead to good, in-demand local jobs."

During the visit, Minister Tierney also visited the award winning Learn Local – Bass Coast Adult Learning and the Chisholm Institute's Wonthaggi Campus.

The campus is now taking enrolments for in person learning in 2025.

BCAL have their Term 2 Course Guide out now and run Cert III in Horticulture and IT, Cert II in Hospitality as well as



Minister Gayle Tierney met with TAFE leaders, Bass Coast Health and Bass Coast College during her visit last week. From left: Stephen Varty (CEO Chisholm Institute), Christine Henderson (BCH Executive Director), Laura Macpherson (CEO TAFE Gippsland), David Miller (CEO, Office of TAFE Coordination and Delivery), Minister for Skills and Training Gayle Tierney, Jordan Crugnale (MP Bass) and Leith Cummings (Principal Bass Coast College).

Salon Assistant and an array of other courses and programs.

"I want to thank David Leslie (Centre Manager), Olivia Hurrell and the extraordinary team at BCAL for the insightful tour which showcased just how vibrant a learning hub it is," Ms Crugnale said.

"It showed how connected they are to community and the Minister and I were thrilled to be able to congratulate them in person for their recent Learn Local Partnership Award with representatives from Colden Homes and Capeview."

The Minister said she was pleased to have been invited to visit Wonthaggi.

"It was great to talk about how we are delivering skills for the region, including at Chisholm TAFE's Wonthaggi campus."

Strength in numbers: Cardell Accountants welcomes Michaela Salvato

BUSINESS

Cardell Accountants is excited to announce that in January 2025, experienced Chartered Accountant, Michaela Salvato has joined the firm as a consultant, bringing with her over 30 years' experience in providing accounting and taxation services to Bass Coast Shire.

Michaela started her career at a "Big 4" accounting firm, before making the move to Phillip Island and working with Stephen Davie in Cowes. In 2002 she established a boutique accounting and financial services firm, based in San Remo, and since then has worked with many small businesses in the region.

Michaela has also worked extensively within the community and not-for-profit area, particularly in the environmental and tourism sectors, with a variety of roles at Bass Coast Landcare Network, Three Creeks Landcare Group, Destination Phillip Island, and most recently as an

ongoing board member of the Phillip Island Nature Parks Board of Management Inc.

As a Chartered Accountant and Registered Tax Agent, Michaela has a Bachelor of Business in Banking and Finance, a Graduate Certificate in Financial Planning and a Certificate in Governance and Risk Management. Michaela is delighted to join Cardell Accountants who as Chartered Accountants, enjoy a reputation for providing expert taxation and accounting services and advice in the region.

The Cardell Accountants partners – Marcus Bond, Lyndal McKenzie, Jason Kennedy and Zachariah Fowler – are excited to welcome Michaela and her clients to the firm.

On behalf of the partners, Marcus Bond stated, "Michaela brings a wealth of knowledge and experience and we are confident her expertise will contribute to the continued strategic growth and success of Cardell Accountants".

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Phillip Island's future tourism is environment, not development: alliance

PLANNING

Bass Coast Shire Council needs to prioritise environmental protection on Phillip Island for future tourism success, according to an alliance of community groups.

And, they say, summertime peak tourism is "unsustainable", with Phillip Island at a "tipping-point".

Since late last year, the groups have been increasing the volume on key issues for the island, following the council elections and now in the lead up to the federal and state elections.

The groups – the Phillip Island Conservation Society (PICS), Island Voice (formerly the ratepayers association) and the Bass Coast branch of the National Trust - now also have a new member in the former CEO of Tourism Victoria and AAA Tourism Jeff Floyd.

In today's paper, the alliance has released a public statement calling on the council to scrap the Bass Coast Unlocking Rural Tourism Strategy (BURT),

and also again urging the round tourism, it adds. State Government to release the "long-overdue" freeze on town boundaries through the Distinctive Areas and Landscapes (DAL) legislation.

The statement says the "full protection of rural landscapes" – and not "inappropriate" tourist attractions - is the key to future tourism growth.

"Our environmental and rural values are under threat from future inappropriate tourism developments", the statement says.

"We need an alternative strategy to promote highyield year-round sustainable and low impact tour-

"The key to our future tourism success is a strong environmental and heritage brand.

'Bass Coast Shire Council needs to put its priority focus on environmental protection and sensitive enhancements across the island."

This environmental and heritage brand needs to be promoted globally, to ensure sustainable year-

"We already have a critical mass of major tourism attractions on the island.

"Phillip Island is the jewel in Victoria's tourism crown. It has a larger array of major tourism attractions than any other destination in Victoria."

The statement says any new high-end tourism should be located in town boundaries and the tourism focus instead be on nature-based year-round visitor experiences, "not more rural attractions".

BURT

The statement says once the State Government finalises the DAL, "and reconfirms its commitment to no more expansion of the island's townships", the one major threat to the island was the BURT, a council planning policy that makes way for rural land to be rezoned for tourism developments.

"BURT is seeking to solve a problem that does not exist - inadequate growth of our tourism industry, by opening up the



Summer-time peak tourism is "unsustainable", with Phillip Island at a "tipping-point", according to a new alliance of community groups. Instead, the natural environment should be the island's global tourism brand.

door for inappropriate and unsustainable tourism developments which will negatively impact the island's environmental values and its farming community.

"The DAL legislation promises to protect rural land outside town boundaries, BURT says rural land can be developed - a fundamental contradiction."

The alliance of groups

says BURT will inflate rural land prices and farming rates, discouraging the continuation of farming.

Last year a public meeting organised by farmers and PICS voted for the shire to scrap BURT, because they say it will damage the environment and lead to overdevelopment outside town boundaries.

BURT was passed by

council in March 2023, but farmers and conservationists were alarmed by its full impact after the Victorian Planning Minister intervened to approve the Vietnam Veterans Museum at Newhaven (rejecting a previous VCAT decision), citing BURT as "effectively identifying all of Phillip Island as being suitable for tourism uses".



OPINION

Public Statement regarding the Bass Coast Unlocking Rural Tourism Strategy (BURT)

By: Greg Johnson (President, Phillip

Peter Paul (President, Island Voice) Ross Lloyd (National Trust - local branch) Jeff Floyd AM; Former CEO, AAA Tourism; Former CEO, Tourism Victoria.

We keenly await the long overdue action by the State Government to freeze the township boundaries on Phillip Island through binding legislation. This was promised six years ago.

Bass Coast has been declared a 'distinctive areas and landscapes' to protect the environment, landscape and lifestyle. We now need the government to finalise the draft Statement of Planning Policy and reconfirm its commitment to no more expansion of the island's townships.

This leaves however one big threat to the protection of our island's precious landscapes and environmental values, the Bass Coast Unlocking Rural Tourism Strategy (BURT). This strategy is seeking to solve a problem that does not exist - inadequate growth of our tourism industry, by opening up the door for inappropriate and unsustainable tourism developments which will negatively impact the island's environmental values and its farming community.

Phillip Island is at a tipping-point. Our summer-time peak tourism is unsustainable. Our environmental and rural values are under threat from fu-

ture inappropriate tourism developments. We need an alternative strategy to promote high-yield year-round sustainable and low impact tourism.

'Unlocking' (sic) rural land for more development is the wrong future path.

The Distinctive Areas and Landscapes legislation promises to protect rural land outside town boundaries, BURT says rural land can be developed - a fundamental contradiction. If implemented, BURT will inflate rural land prices and rates payable by farmers, discouraging the continuation of farming.

Even without the planning scheme amendments necessary to implement the BURT strategy, as an approved council document it encourages rural land development. The Newhaven Museum ministerial approval showed this.

We must protect our remaining farms and farming businesses.

BURT downplays the importance of agriculture, so will make farming less

We must protect our island's coastal landscapes

If implemented BURT sanctioned coastal developments would threaten National Trust classified coastal landscapes across the shire, a tourism draw-

We must protect our island's rural landscapes.

If implemented BURT would shrink our stunning rural landscapes separating our townships.

We already have a critical mass of major tourism attractions on the island.

Phillip Island is the jewel in Victoria's tourism crown.

It has a larger array of major tourism attractions than any other destination in Victoria. 'High-end' tourism is best accommodated within town boundaries.

Sustainable ism growth should come through nature-based yearround visitor experiences, not more rural 'attractions'. Why doesn't the council put its energies into developing multi-day walking trails linked to overnight accommodation, for example.

The key to our future tourism success is a strong environmental tage brand.

To grow sustainable year-round tourism, we need to build Phillip Island's environmental and heritage brand and promote this brand globally. Adhering to strong environmental and heritage values, including the full protection of rural landscapes is the key to future responsible tourism growth. Bass Coast Shire Council needs to put its priority focus on environmental protection and sensitive enhancements across the

BURT is the wrong strategy for Phillip Island.





Visit: thecap.com.au for more infomation

*Dates and locations may be subject to change. Visit thecap.com.au for the most up-to-date information.

RECREATION

Turf restoration works on the Cowes Recreation Reserve has seen the Phillip Island Cricket Club (PICC) return to their home ground for the tail end of the season, with Phillip Island Football Netball Club (PIFNC) President Chris Ross optimistic about the ground's capacity to see out the football season.

The oval was deemed out-ofaction after the 2024 football season, which saw four teams training on the oval at once several times per week, highlighting the "desperate" need for a second sporting oval.

The closure came less than a year after council spent \$300,000 on restoration works in late 2023, and shortly after all three Island Ward councillors said the need for a second sporting oval should be one of council's top priorities.

"Cricket is back on the ground and enjoying the lush outfield that is currently covering the surface," a council spokesperson said.

"The football club is still undertaking pre-season training at Newhaven College and keeping off the Cowes surface to give it every opportunity to last the winter months."

Over the last summer the council's ovals and mowing team replaced approximately 2200 cubic metres of turf in the most impacted areas, maintained a fertiliser application and spraying regimen.

They then applied 100 cubic metres of turf sand, according to a council spokesperson. The grounds were also watered nightly and were cut up to three times per week to maintain the playing surface and promote growth.

The spokesperson said upcoming works include undertaking a Verti-Drain sweep of the ground to improve aeration and to promote root growth,



The Phillip Island Cricket Club has resumed playing on the Cowes oval after council works revitalised the muchstrained ground, with the football club optimistic about the chances of the oval lasting through the season.

and the installation of synthetic pads behind the goal lines to prevent wear.

PIFNC President Chris Ross said the new works "seem to have taken really well".

"Hopefully now the grass has had 12 months (since the \$300,000 restoration works in 2023), it should be fine," the Club President said.

"I'm confident that it's going to be fine all year."

Uncertain junior season

As to whether junior teams would be forced to play season games on the Newhaven College oval, Chris said the club would "play it by ear" alongside consultation with council, but that it was ultimately council's decision.

"Council is working with the football club on arrangements to plan for the 2025 season to

maintain the ground's condition through to finals," a council spokesperson said.

Currently the club is using the Newhaven College oval for training, which Chris said the club had been "really blessed" and "lucky" to be able to use.

Having to move junior games to the Newhaven College oval would mean significant club revenue losses from canteen sales, a fate the cricket club suffered for a significant portion of their current season.

"The canteen approximately turns over \$5000 on a Sunday. If we had to move games out to the College we'd lose a lot of money," Chris said.

The move would also put a strain on families who may need to attend multiple matches and training for children playing at two different venues.

Lobbying for funds

Currently, under the council's masterplan for the sports hub, it could be 20 years before work begins on new ovals, with both the shire and state scrambling for funds.

As reported in December, the club has been lobbying for the urgently needed funding for the new ovals as the federal election looms.

With close to 600 members, the club said it is bursting at the seams in the old clubhouse and changerooms.

The current oval is unable to cope with the high level of use, which sees up to four teams training at once several nights each weeknight, along with AusKick sessions and the regular home games throughout the season.

Election is coming

As you're no doubt aware, a federal election has to be held this year, before mid-May. Although a date has yet to be confirmed, campaigning by candidates is definitely underway.

Wherever possible, we try to provide a forum for local candidates, covering their appearances and events.

Closer to the election, we will run an election feature, offering every candidate the opportunity to speak directly to voters.

In the meantime, we have created a page on our website dedicated to election coverage, where we will link any major articles about the election and the candidates, to make it easier for our readers to find out more about those who are vying to be their representative.

This election is shaping up to be one of the more significant ones in recent history, as politics around the world, and in Australia, becomes increasingly polarised.

It is easy to feel disheartened with the political system. But democracy is a privilege and using your vote to shape the future of the area where you live, and the country, is important.

All politicians are not the same. All party policies are not the same. However closely aligned our major parties and other candidates might appear, there are fundamental differences between them all.

It's important to inform yourself and make sure your vote (and your preferences) help deliver the outcome you want.

As recent global events have shown, democracy is precious and fragile. Its strength and continuation depends on us, the voters.

Surfing into the picture

PHOTOGRAPHY

What started out as a beachside post-university break has morphed into a career for photographer Claudia Tivendale.

Five years ago, Claudia decided to spend a summer living at her parent's holiday house. Her love of surfing had developed over the years of family holidays on the island, so she thought it was the perfect spot to take a break before jumping into a career.

When she picked up a part time job with the Nature Parks, everything seemed to be falling into place. Then, like for many young people, life was derailed when Covid hit.

Suddenly that summer holiday turned into something more permanent and the "difficult transition" to a full-time resident during the lockdown and restrictions, was helped by her surfing.

"It is a great way to make connections," she said.

Alongside her love of surfing was a passion for photography, which started to grow a life of its own.

Claudia, who has a degree in business and PR, started to think seriously about how she could combine her business skills with her love of surfing. Shortly after, Claudia Tivendale Photography was born.

"I'd always thought about photography in the background and decided if I don't do it now, I probably never will."

She said she's been surprised at how it has taken off.

So far, work has included photographing surfing competitions, a few branding jobs for small businesses and shoots for wetsuit and swimwear companies.

She also takes family and pregnancy portraits, shoots weddings and of course, the island's "incredible scenery".

Surf shots

The chance to utilise her marketing and photography skills to help small businesses has been a rewarding one, but Claudia said the thrill of photographing surfers has not diminished.

"My preference is to be in the water. Being a surfer myself, I

can predict what the surfers are going to do, where they are going to move, which is helpful."

The island provides plenty of picturesque locations for surf shots; Claudia nominates Cat Bay as her favourite for long boarders, and Woolamai.

"I love seeing the Pinnacles in the background. It really stamps the photo as a Phillip Island shot."

She describes just before sunset as "the golden hour", but said great surf shots can happen any time of day.

"I've had beautiful shots at midday, when it's been over-cast. You just adapt and that's part of the fun. Sometimes nature is on your side, sometimes it isn't."

Follow Claudia on Facebook and Instagram.

www.claudiativendale.com

Read an extended version of the interview with Claudia in the Summer edition of The Island Magazine, out now. Available for free at the Advertiser office (60 Chapel Street, Cowes), cafes, restaurants, stores, accommodation and attractions, as well as local newsagents.



"Flippers are a must", says Claudia of being in the water juggling a camera and underwater casing, to capture all the surfing action. Photo: Claudia Tivendale Photography.

Dog fight over dog park

A war of words has broken out between council and dog owners, over council's failure to prioritise an off-leash area on Phillip Island.

The dog owners association is frustrated Bass Coast Shire Council didn't apply for funding from the \$13.4 million dog parks program set up by the State Government in 2023.

Cheryl Owens, president of the Bass Coast and Phillip Island Dog Owners Association, is mystified by the council's failure to apply for funding.

She said despite land designated for a dog park in the masterplan for the new sporting hub in Cowes, extensive consultation showing high demand, and the dog association working in good faith with the council and other land managers, no progress has been made on a fenced in dog park.

"It's clear council is not giving this any priority."

The Advertiser asked Bass Coast Shire Council why it had decided not to apply for funding through the government's New and Upgraded Dog Parks program, but they did not respond by our deadline.

However, members of the dog owners' association say they received a variety of responses from the council justifying the decision.

These include not having a site, not having an off-leash strategy, needing the Department of Transport to design and approve a turning lane to the site of the proposed Recreation Reserve and inadequate drainage at the Ventnor Road site.

Grant

Round one of the State Government program was only open to areas that had received promises for a dog park in the 2022 election. Fifteen councils were recipients of the \$7.7 million, with some councils receiving as much as \$800,000, while others like Yarra, Manningham and Cardinia, had two dog parks funded.

The second round of the program, which accepted applica-



After Bass Coast Shire Council failed to apply for funding through the State Government's \$13.4 million dog parks program, dog owners say a fenced in dog park is clearly not a priority for council. Photo: Camilo Fierro, Unsplash.

tions up until October 2024, was open to all councils, for proposals to design and deliver offleash areas.

Grants of up to \$300,000 were available.

Conditions of the grant included having available land owned by council, and a 1:1 cofunding contribution for any grant over \$100,000.

Applicants also had to provide a site location map, design concept (or annotated sketch), confirmation of other funding, documentation of community consultation plus relevant policies and strategies such as a Masterplan, Open Space strategy, Domestic Animal Management Plan (DAMP) or Dog Off-Leash plan.

The dog owners' association is frustrated the council never made them aware of the potential funding opportunity, despite repeated meetings working with them on the DAMP.

Ann Grose, a member of the DAMP committee said when she raised the matter, a council officer said "significant scoping work" was done into the possibility of a round two application, but "the carnival site did not ultimately meet the criteria ... due to design and infrastructure constraints" but background work was progressing.

She said council never outlined what these constraints were, despite her asking for the information.

The Advertiser also asked council what other avenues it was investigating for future funding options for an off-leash dog park.

Masterplan timeline

The land for the proposed Recreation Reserve in Cowes, which includes a dog park, was purchased by council in 2010, with an adjoining parcel of land (the Carnival land) purchased in 2020.

A timeline for the Recreation Reserve master plan was adopted in October 2023, which included a dog park in the shortterm category - one of the first facilities proposed to be developed there.

There has been fierce criticism of the reserve development's timeline from many in the community, particularly over the decision to categorise a new football oval in the medium term (11 to 20 years) and the Aquatic Centre designated as long term (up to 20 years away).

Cheryl called on the new council to re-examine the issue and put development of the dog park, as the first step in a reprioritisation of the new recreation hub, at the top of its list.



for Monash in the upcoming federal election.

Labor announces candidate for Monash

ELECTION

The Australian Labor Party has selected Gippsland local Tully Fletcher as the federal Labor candidate for Monash.

The announcement makes Mr Fletcher the fourth candidate to confirm their intention to contest the seat, although a date has yet to be set for the election.

He joins sitting member (and current cross-bencher) Russell Broadbent who earlier this month announced he would run as an independent, Liberal candidate Mary Aldred and independent Deb Leonard.

Fletcher says this election voters are being offered a clear choice of "Peter Dutton-led Liberals who haven't delivered for Gippsland in two decades, or a fresh local Labor candidate raised in Gippsland, ready to tackle the cost of living, and fight for our fair share".

"All the Liberals are offering Monash are cuts and a nuclear power station we didn't ask for," he said.

Background

Tully Fletcher is a third generation Gippslander and lives in Kilcunda with his partner Dani and their children Daph and Ted, just down the road from where he grew up.

He was educated at public schools in Wonthaggi, Dalyston and Leongatha, and spends summers at Wilsons Prom with family and friends.

He describes himself as working "in business and government as an adviser to ministers, CEOs and communities to deliver real change and improve the lives of all Australians".

"I led work with business and unions to create Australia's first ever wage-theft laws to make sure all workers are paid right and paid on time," Tully said.

"I know families, farms and businesses in Monash are under pressure and need a better deal. I'll fight hard to deliver the services, infrastructure, mobile coverage, and internet speeds we deserve."

As a keen motorbike rider, he said he knows how bad the local roads can be and "will make road safety upgrades a top priority".

"As part of your Federal Labor team, I will work to bring down the cost of living, protect jobs and wages, and ensure everyone in Gippsland can afford and access housing, health, education and care," Tully said.

"I believe Gippsland voters in Monash deserve a federal MP who calls it like it is, shares our values, works as hard as we do, and gets things done."

Get knitting for penguins

COMMUNITY

The Penguin Foundation and Phillip Island Nature Parks' Knits for Nature program has been hugely successful for over 20 years.

Generous ters and groups from all around the world answered the call to knit jumpers for little penguins to save their lives in the event of oil spills.

These days, the Wildlife Rehabilitation Centre is well stocked with jumpers in the unfortunate event of an oil spill.

"We thank the hundreds and thousands of people who contributed their expert knitting skills to provide these life-saving garments for the estimated colony of 38,000

on Phillip Island," said a Penguin Foundation spokesperson.

"To continue raising vital funds for the Penguin Foundation, we gladly accept themed jumpers, which we sell with plush penguin toys in our retail stores.

"These funds directly support penguin and wildlife rehabilitation, as well as research. Please note, the jumpers are not worn by actual penguins," the spokesperson said.

"Any style that is bit eye catching, stripey or themed would be wonderful as they are very attractive souvenirs for people visiting in-store and they raise vital funds for our not-for-profit Penguin Foundation.

"Christmas colours

little penguins living are popular, as are football-themed jumpers and countries of the world flag colours."

As the jumpers are not for use on animals, the need for pure wool is gone – acrylic is fine. Little hats and scarves are very welcome too. Please note that buttons and other embellishments that may pose a choking hazard to children cannot be accepted.

If knitting is not for you, a crochet pattern is also available.

Little penguin jumper patterns can be found at: penguinfoundation.org.au/whatsnew/

Please send or deliver your little penguin jumpers to: Penguin Foundation: Shop 4, 154/156 Thompson Ave, Cowes VIC 3922.



The Penguin Foundation is calling on knitters to create jumpers for the plush toy penguins on sale at the Penguin Parade, helping to raise money for the not-for-profit foundation.

Leonard: it's time for change

ELECTION

There isn't an official date yet for the federal election, but there's no doubt the campaigning has already begun.

Independent Deb Leonard is back for another attempt to take the seat of Monash.

In 2022, in what can be described as a whirlwind campaign of three months. Deb managed to secure 10 per cent of the vote.

This time around, it's a different ball game. The political landscape has changed, with a handful of successful independents gaining a high profile in Federal Parliament.

With many political experts predicting a close race and the real possibility of minority government, the focus on independent candidates is greater than ever.

The pre-selection process by Voices for Monash started back in May 2024, with Deb Leonard confirmed as candidate in August.

This election, the difference is not just the longer lead time.

'Last time we had a great group of very amazing, passionate volunteers, but none of us had any real campaign experience," said Deb.

"So we were putting the plane together as we were flying it.

"And I feel like this time, we've built the plane. We know the destination. We know how to get there. We just need to fly the plane there."

In concrete terms, there's also "a volunteer base which is growing by the day", and a different role for them.

The focus is on "empowering volunteers to take the lead and take initiative", she said.

"All our volunteers sign up to our campaign values, then they are empowered to support the campaign however they wish.

'We've got people organising door knocking sessions, flyer stalls, kitchen teas.

"The last campaign was very central around me, because we didn't have these systems or structures in place. This time its empowering the community to act.

"The benefit of having volunteers out independently campaigning means we reach all different parts of the electorate and all different demographics.

"And this whole community independent movement is all about listening to the commu-



Deb Leonard at a recent event in Drouin, where a team of more than 100 volunteers went door knocking to spread awareness of the independent's campaign for the seat of Monash.

nity and making sure your policies are aligned with community values.

The longer lead time, coupled with more funding, means a greater reach across the electorate, something that was a challenge last time.

As well as local donations, which she says have increased "significantly" since the last election, Deb has also received money from Climate 200 (\$214,340), Regional Voices Fund (\$30,000) and Keep them Honest (\$16,900) among others, to help with the campaign. A list of her campaign donations is available on her website.

This time around, she believes more people are willing to consider an independent candidate, "because they've seen the great work that the independents elected last time are doing in public and in parliament".

They've seen how those independents are bringing common sense solutions to parliament and working collaboratively and improving legislation and consulting with their constituents about policy. People are looking at that going, well, we can have that too."

Disillusioned

Deb believes Monash has been ignored for decades by both major parties - "I really don't see much happening around the place since the change of government" - and it's time for a

"More and more people are just disillusioned with both major parties," she said.

"I think we're still being ignored. We're still missing out on funding for things like roads and recreational facilities.

She said the ALP promise of free TAFE means nothing, if locally the TAFE is sitting empty and they're not even running inperson courses.

Deb believes Monash needs stronger representation to get the services the community need, including TAFE, good mental health services and infrastructure upgrades.

Her focus is very much on the grassroots level and the concerns of local people.

"This time around people are very concerned about the cost of

"The cost of groceries is going up, bills are going up, power bills are going up, insurance, rents, mortgages are going up.

"Housing and cost of living were an issue at the last election, but even more so now.'

Difficulties with the NDIS has been raised by voters and power outages are another voter concern.

We're seeing more and more power outages, a lot of the time due to extreme storms, which I think you can link back to climate change.

"There's not much being done to make sure that we're resilient moving forward. We're going to have more extreme storms and power outages.

"And every time there's a power outage, businesses lose money."

The Coalition's promise to build a nuclear power plant in the electorate has received a mixed reaction, she said, with people concerned the proposal has been pushed on them without consultation or any details.

"We need clean, affordable, reliable power now and we can achieve that with solar and bat-

"So that's where my focus is, not the prospect of a nuclear power plant in 20-years' time."

Hotspots

Local erosion hotspots have become a key election focus.

There's an issue of 'we need to act now to protect these beaches', but we also need to look at the wider cause," she said.

"We can't keep sticking band aids on things." Science based climate action,

environmental protection, cost of living, housing and integrity are key parts of her platform for this election.

"If you address the integrity issue, then we might fix a whole lot of other problems as well. The issue of government con-

tracts being unfairly awarded, pork barrelling, and government grants going where they think it will win votes rather than where it is actually needed."

On the ground locally, she's keen to see funding for aquatic facilities, bike and pump tracks and more facilities for young people.

She is also keen to talk to as many local residents as possible. A list of upcoming events are on her website, and Deb also welcomes offers by residents to catch up. You can contact her via her website.

While there will be a "big campaign event closer to the election", at the moment the team is focused on smaller events, working on the ground.

"I'm going to put my best case forward and hopefully let everyone know what I represent ... a better, stronger, more cohesive, community-focused way of doing politics.

It's a marginal seat, but we still haven't seen the funding we should. That's what I'm frustrated about. We didn't get it under the Liberals. We didn't get it un-

"I think having a community independent is the only way we're going to get some action.

"We can't keep voting the same way and expect a different

www.debleonard4monash. com.au/

Taking the plunge to celebrate 70

COMMUNITY

splash on her 70th birthday earlier this month.

She decided to celebrate the milestone with a jump off the Cowes jetty, accompanied by friends and family.

"I had never jumped off the Cowes pier and decided that's what I wanted to do for my 70th birthday on February 4," Debbie

Three generations joined her to take the plunge.

"One was my grandson, who gave me the most wonderful surprise, by coming from Canada, and my daughter and granddaughter came from Perth."

Her husband John cheered on

from the sidelines.

Debbie Walsh made quite a Phillip Island seven years ago and said they have made "so many wonderful friends since coming to the island".

"I was amazed how many wanted to come and join in, and jump or celebrate with us.

"It was an amazing happy experience, and we all thoroughly enjoyed it."

After the jetty jump, the group went to Hotel for a celebratory

The couple, who celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary next year, moved from Frankston and quickly made friends in the community Debbie describes as "so relaxed and friendly".

Since arriving, Debbie joined

the Glams and the local cold wa-Debbie and John moved to ter submerge group - and members from both did the birthday jump with her.

She describes Phillip Island as "the perfect place" to live.

"There's beautiful surroundings and beautiful people," Deb-

"Moving to Phillip Island in our retirement has been one of the best decisions we have made.

We have found everyone to be so welcoming, warm and friendly and they have made us feel a wonderful sense of belong-

"It's different in the suburbs; there people walk past and don't even smile at you.

"Phillip island is a very special



Debbie Walsh (centre) jumped, while her grandchildren back flipped from the Cowes jetty to celebrate her 70th birthday on February 4. Photo: Ian R Photography. More photos at pisra.com.au



Police are out there to keep you safe. If you still choose to take risks while driving and break the road rules, chances are you will be caught.









free water bottles from Westernport Water.



Nola, Georgie, Lylah and Arlo at Bass Valley Primary School were happy to get their Newhaven College Preps proudly displaying their new water bottles

Water bottles make a splash

COMMUNITY

As the school year begins, Westernport Water is delighted to celebrate another successful year of its Prep Water Bottle Ini-

Now in its ninth year, the initiative ensures prep students start their education journey with a free, reusable stainless steel water bottle, reinforcing the importance of hydration and sustainability.

This year, 250 stainless steel water bottles were given to excited prep students across seven local primary schools, including Cowes, Our Lady Star of the Sea, Newhaven College, Newhaven, San Remo, Bass Valley, and Powlett River.

Since the initiative's inception in 2017, Westernport Water said 2505 bottles have been provided to new prep students, "helping them develop healthy hydration habits from day one".

"It's important to create healthy habits from day one and encourage students to keep hydrated throughout the school day," said Westernport Water's Managing Director, Dona Tantirimudalige

"We are proud to continue our partnership with local primary schools to support the well-being and education of our community's youngest learners.

"Encouraging students to make tap water their go-to drink, not only supports their hydration but also fosters early lessons in sustainability.

Primary Newhaven ool's prep teach-Bethanie Williams School's thanked Westernport Water for its ongoing support.

"Our prep children love their new drink bottles," Bethanie said.

They are learning to

re-fill their bottles at our beautiful new drinking taps that have a water bottle refill station, also funded by Westernport Water."

At the heart of the prep water bottle initiative is the Choose Tap campaign, which highlights the health and environmental benefits of drinking tap water over sugary alternatives.

Research shows that even a two per cent drop in body water levels can lead to a 13 per cent decrease in concentration, making proper hydration essential for students' learning and well-being.



Big grins from Cowes Primary School Preps, receiving their new water bottles.



new water bottles from Westernport Water.



Our Lady Star of the Sea Preps holding their San Remo Primary Preps Bodhi, Brooklyn, Tahli, Rune and Bodhi with their new water bottles.



Billy and Mia from Powlett River Primary School with their new water bottles.



Newhaven Primary School's Prep A with their water bottles.



Cowes Primary School preps with their new water bottles.



Newhaven Primary School's Prep B were delighted to receive their water bottles.

Fisheries facing the chop

"Our workforce will focus on keeping compliance levels high, and on major fishing crime, while working closely with the community to provide them the education and resources they need to fish responsibly.

"We're confident our new operating model means fishing in Victoria will be as good into the future as it is today," the VFA spokesperson said.

"We are consulting with employees and the union on workforce changes, and will provide all staff with the support they need through this period.'

Devastating

Kevin Brown does not share the VFA's optimism that the new model will provide the protections needed.

'These resources have taken decades to be built to provide the level of compliance that is needed to support industry and fish stocks.

"Within a very short period, the commercial industry will feel a massive impact," he said.

"Anybody will be able to take and sell fish - no one will be checking.

"Marine parks could collapse, because no one is protecting

"Fishing charters, local boat operators ... they could be out of business.

"The people in charge of these decision have a very strong recreational fishing bent, but that needs to be balanced with a commercial fishing outlook, and general resource management responsibilities.

"If they (the government) make these decisions now and rush it through before the next state election – it will be too late reverse them." "extremely distressing" for staff and their families.

While officers could apply for one of the nine new roles, Kevin said that would involve relocation, and for senior and regional fisheries officers, a significant downgrading of their roles.

Compliance

Under the proposed new model, Kevin said compliance would become an increasing issue.

"About 90 per cent of the population will generally try to do right thing.

"There's a couple of percent who don't know and make an honest mistake.

"Then there's a core of people who deliberately make a decision because there are profits or a benefit for them.

"Fisheries staff keep control over that group. Take away control, then that percentage grows."

He said the government's own records show there are more than a million people actively involved in fishing.

"Even if 90 per cent are compliant, that makes 100,000 people who aren't doing the right thing. Who is going to look after that?'

He said it was important the fishing community united to oppose the changes, "as everyone in the community stands to lose from this".

If officers are removed from the system, he said there is no one to take on the marine safety role.

"Victoria police don't do it; they don't want to do it and don't have the correct qualifications.

"They (the department) are saying it's only under consideration, but they've notified staff that they will be terminated," Kevin said.

"In my experience, you don't pull a hand grenade and throw

Kevin said the decision was it in amongst the staff, if you aren't going to do it.

"This has gone a long way down the track before this came about.'

He also raised the question of accountability for funds raised from boat licenses and registra-

The responsibility for marine safety has recently been transferred to the VFA, along with funding from boat licences and registrations, Kevin said.

That money was earmarked by parliament to improve boating safety.

There needs to be a serious audit of whether that money is now going into the area for Victorian boaters. My information indicates that might not be the case."

Kevin believes the changes to Fisheries are politically motivated.

"This is politically driven. There's no valid explanation available that indicates why this is good for the environment, for fish stocks, the industry or charter boats.

"It's all about savings. There can't be any other explanation.

"We need to present a united front to government, saying this is unacceptable.

"These are our resources; the government only manage them on our behalf."

He said while all government departments were under pressure to slash budgets, due to the high level of state debt, "there's a million areas government can go to first without doing this sort of thing."

Back on social media, the debate raged on, with many expressing frustration over government financial mismanagement, with one describing it as "cost cutting essential services to pay off the massive unsustainable debt".



A local farmer said the proposed increase to the fire services levy, linked to the improved capital value of a property, could make a farm unviable as land values rise.

Farmers could be hit with eye-watering levy hike

GOVERNMENT

A Surf Beach farmer has hit out at the State Government's proposed increase on the fire services levy for farmers.

Bill Cleeland, who is the Victorian Farmers Federation (VFF) Bass Coast president, said farmers currently paid five times the residential levy but under the proposed increase could pay as much as 255 per cent more.

"The new levy will be linked to the capital improved value (CIV) of a property so as land values rise it has the potential to make a farm no longer viable," Bill said.

"I don't believe any farmers have a problem with contributing to the levy equally, but to increase it by that much is disgusting and to try and introduce this when we are facing such extreme weather conditions is unthinkable.

We see this as an underhand way for the State Government to introduce a land tax on agricultural land which has always been exempt."

The State Government has adopted the Fire Service Property Levy Act, following the commitment made by both the Coalition and Labor governments going into the 2010 election to adopt the Bushfire Royal Commission recommendation to remove the fire service funding from insurance.

He said while the levy rates were yet to be finalised, the government had outlined its estimates in a series of fact sheets, which show in the CFA



Bill Cleeland, who is Victorian Farmers Federation (VFF) Bass Coast president, said farmers currently paid five times the residential levy but under the new levy could pay as much as 255 per cent more.

region, households will pay 11.7 cents per \$1000 of CIV; farms 52c/\$1000 CIV, businesses 129c/\$1000 CIV and industrial sites 258c/\$1000 CIV.

In the MFB region (within about 16km of Melbourne) households will pay 7.6c/\$1000 CIV, businesses 83c/\$1000 CIV and industrial 164c/\$1000 CIV.

A \$2.5 million farm, for example would be charged \$1500, while a household would pay under \$400.

"Analysis of a number of rural property owners by the (VFF) shows that some members will be better off under this new system but more will be considerably worse off," he said.

The proposed system is unfair to rural communities and on farmers and the VFF is calling on the Treasurer and Premier to adopt a more equitable approach."

What does the Victorian Fisheries Authority do?

FISHING

According to its website, the Victorian Fisheries Authority (VFA) has a role in recreational and commercial fishing, aquaculture, education, enforcement and scientific research.

It collects boating and fishing licences and now incorporates Better Boating Victoria.

It covers enforcement of illegal fishing activity with performing officers spot checks, with the ability to issue fines, confiscate equipment and issue penalties.

"Fisheries officers are employed to protect our fisheries and promote responsible fishing and boating. One of their roles is to ensure compliance with fishing regulations," the website states.

"These regulations are in place to ensure our fisheries resources are sustainable and shared by the Victorian fishing community.'

Law enforcement includes enforcing regulations around litter, care of marine national

parks, boating safety (including speeding, incorrect safe-ty gear), wildlife protection, campfires and shipwrecks.

Figures from the previous year showed the VFA inspected 12 aquaculture businesses, and made inspections of 150 commercial fishing vessels, 687 marine safety inspections, 8164 recreational fishing inspections and 349 patrols of marine parks.

In that time, they issued 237 infringement notices and detected 702 offenders.

vfa.vic.gov.au/



Enjoy the Twilight at Newhaven Primary

EVENT

Get ready for an unforgettable evening of live music, vibrant community spirit and family fun at the Newhaven Primary Twilight Festival, on Saturday February 22, from 3pm to 7pm.

This annual event is a lively celebration of music, food and entertainment for all ages!

Dress in your most colourful festival attire, pack a picnic rug or camping chair, and get ready to soak up the atmosphere before the sun sets.

Enjoy a mouthwatering lineup of food trucks, browse market stalls showcasing local crafts and take part in family friendly activities.

Plus, don't miss your chance to win exciting raffle prizes.

Sit back and be entertained by a fabulous array of local talent.

Newhaven Primary students have prepared special performances to showcase their talents.

Also providing musical entertainment are two local arts.

The Slow Brew is a soulful local ensemble serving up smooth, groove-rich melodies that will get your feet tapping.



The Newhaven Primary Twilight Festival on February 22 is a celebration of music, food and entertainment, including market stalls and a mouthwatering lineup of food trucks.

Phillip Island singer songwriter Mark Howard is bringing his signature mix of folky blues rock and heartfelt storytelling to the stage.

Don't miss this perfect chance to enjoy the magic of live music and connect with the community under a beautiful twilight sky.

Entry is a gold coin donation, and everyone's welcome. Please bring some extra cash, as EFT-POS facilities are limited.

This is a family-friendly, alcohol free event.

For more details, follow Newhaven Primary School on Facebook. /Sponsored article/

THE PULSE _____



Come and enjoy Sanny Pub Day on March 2, at the San Remo Hotel Motel. The day includes live music, games, prizes and giveaways ... including the chance to win a month of free Parmas.

Come celebrate Sanny Pub Day

EVENT

Sanny Pub Day is the annual celebration of the San Remo Hotel Motel, held on the first Sunday of March each year.

The day is a celebration of the hotel, its team, and you - their amazing customers.

'Think of it as our birthday party," the hotel says ... but you get all

This year on March 2, you can enjoy:

- Live music from local legends Late For Church (3.30 pm - 6.30 pm)
- Free pool, table tennis, and other games
- Lots of prizes and giveaways - including the chance to win a month of free Parmas

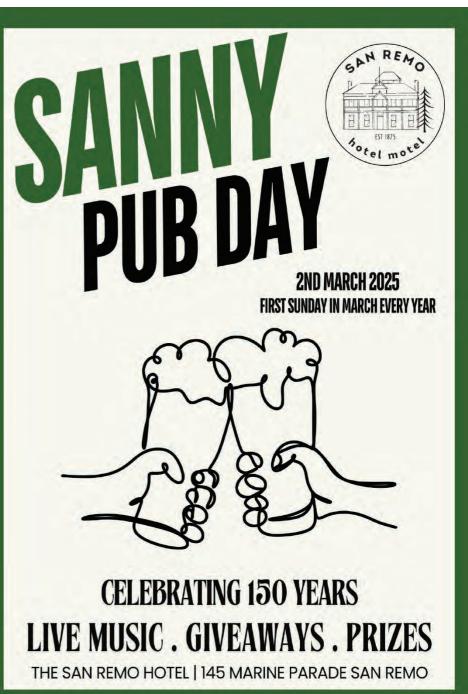
If your mouth is watering at the idea of a month of free Parma's, simply purchase a Sanny Pub Day T-shirt for \$35 for a chance to win.

This year is extra special as it kicks off the celebrations for the pub's 150th anniversary (which falls this year).

Stay tuned for more events celebrating this milestone throughout the vear.

/Sponsored article/





Raise a glass for Widow Clicquot

FILM

Get your champagne flutes ready. On Wednesday February 26, the Phillip Island Movie Club presents Widow Clicquot at Berninneit, at 7.30pm.

Widow Clicquot is based on the true story of the "Grande Dame of Champagne," Barbe-Nicole Ponsardin (1777-1866) who, at the age of 20, became Madame Clicquot after marrying the scion of a winemaking family.

Though their marriage was arranged, a timeless love blossomed between Barbe-Nicole (Haley Bennett) and her unconventional, erratic husband, François (Tom Sturridge). After her husband's untimely death, Barbe-Nicole flouts convention by assuming the reins of the fledgling wine business and revolutionises the champagne industry to become one of the world's first great entrepreneurs.

Now the champagne is named after her, Veuve Clicquot. The English for veuve is widow.

The story doesn't convert to riveting theatre but does highlight her struggles with a male dominated commerce. However, some critics say that it doesn't go deeply enough into her invention of the gyro palette now known as the Riddling Rack

We here in Austra-



On Wednesday February 26, the Phillip Island Movie Club presents Widow Clicquot at Berninneit, at 7.30pm.

lia know how highly the French hold in esteem their traditional Champagnes methods and legend has it that Barbe-Nicole Ponsardin Clicquot, on a suggestion from her Cellar Master, Antoine Muller. created a whole new method to clarify her wines, called Riddling in 1811. It was patented in 1864 by a Mr Michelot and sadly not by Madame Clicquot.

This is a private event for Phillip Island Movie Club (PIMC) members only and you must have your membership ticket and your Trybooking receipt to enter.

Please note the film begins at 7.30pm, runs for 90 minutes and is rated M.

If you haven't collected

your PIMC membership ticket, the club will be issuing tickets from 6.30pm. Please arrive in enough time to collect your membership. Remember there are 260 people all arriving at the same time. There will be free drinks and nibbles prior to the film.

If you were unable to book tickets for the screening on February 26, you can use your PIMC membership ticket to attend a screening of Widow Clicquot on Saturday March 8 at 7.30pm. Please book for this film if you are going to attend.

Members can check their emails for a direct link to Trybooking for this



The Rhyll Coast Action group has reminded gardeners that now is the time to deadhead your agapanthus, which is classified as an environmental and invasive weed.

It's time to deadhead

The Rhyll Coast Action group has reminded gardeners that now is the time to deadhead your agapanthus.

The group said the coastline needs protection from "garden escapes", which are plants that spread into areas where they are not wanted.

"These invasive species reduce biodiversity by overtaking native vegetation and neighbouring property."

The group has created a new initiative, offering to deadhead agapanthus for Rhyll residents.

"Whilst this plant is hardy and needs little care, seasonal deadheading once the flowers die or begin to develop seed is very necessary to protect our wider natural environment, and local infrastructure like our environmental gutters," a spokesperson said.

They are hoping the initiative will raise awareness of the importance of seasonal deadheading to minimise the impact of "garden escapes".

On February 17, the Rhyll Coast Action group helped Rhyll resident Norma to deadhead her agapanthus hedge, which was overgrown and had spread throughout her garden.

Control

Agapanthus praecox is an environmental and invasive weed. It is native to South Africa and is known as the African Lily as it is a member of the Liliaceae

The flowers form seed which can be carried by the wind and rain. These seeds readily grow wherever they land; be it in your garden or that of your neighbours.

Please remove all seed heads and put them into your green bin.



March 14-15, 2025

BERNINNEIT CINEMA - THOMPSON AVE COWES | PHILLIP ISLAND

- 10 x Short & Feature length films
- Live Music
- Surf Memorabilia

FOLLOW US

Session # 1: Fri March 14 | 7.00 pm Session # 2: Sat March 15 | 4.00 pm

Foxy Junes | 6.00 pm

Session # 3: Sat March 15 | 7.00 pm

\$20.00 per session | \$50.00 Festival pass

@basscoast.surf.film.festival

TICKETS

ON SALE

🖈 trybooking





ENTERTAINMENT

Multi-award-winning singer and Rolling Stone Woman of the Year, Clare Bowditch is coming to Bass Coast to feature in a very special performance.

Part of International Women's Day celebrations, the 100 Women, 100 Stories community choir project is at the Union Theatre in Wonthaggi on Sunday, March 16.

Described by organisers as "a soul stirring event" that will inspire and uplift the audience, voices from the local community will be onstage.

"We have gathered nearly 100 incredible women to take centre stage as part of 100 Women, 100 Stories," organisers said.

"Composed by six award-winning female musicians, this song cycle is inspired by the real-life stories of women from all walks of life.

"Over one transformative weekend, participants will learn and rehearse a collection of powerful songs."

The culmination will be a breathtaking performance on the stage of the Wonthaggi Union Theatre.

"This project is a powerful testament to the transformative role of arts, song, and culture in uniting communities and amplifying women's voices," said Mayor, Cr Rochelle Halstead.

"Through the universal language of music, 100 Women, 100 Stories celebrates the diversity, resilience, and shared experiences of women, while fostering a sense of connection and belonging.

'It's about more than just a performance - it's about inspiring change, honouring the stories that shape us, and creating a brighter, more inclusive future for all women and girls.

"We couldn't be more excited to see this magic unfold on stage at the Union Theatre, especially as part of our cente-



Community choir project 100 Women, 100 Stories is at the Union Theatre in Wonthaggi on March 16, featuring award winning singer songwriter Clare-Bowditch. Photo: Anna Robinson.

nary celebrations," she said.

The event has been produced by council in partnership with Westernport Water, Phillip Island Nature Parks and Bass Coast Health.

"We have a long association with these organisations and of celebrating International Women's Day together and acknowledging the women in our community," Cr Halstead said.

To mark this special occasion, guests will be treated to an afternoon tea, with drinks available for purchase from the

Experience the magic from the seats and cheer on these incredible women as they share their stories through music. Everyone is welcome - this is a day for everyone to stand together.

The concert starts at 3.30pm on March 16 at the Wonthaggi Union Theatre.

Tickets: www.trybooking.com/events/ landing/1325013

Community Choir project Village School secures with Clare Bowditch long-term future

February 12 marked a significant milestone for Phillip Island Village School (PIVS), with a new longterm lease signed.

Landholder Ruth Partridge and Principal Kate Eastcott officially signed the new lease, securing the school's tenancy on Berrys Beach Road, Ventnor.

Since opening in early 2016, PIVS has been dedicated to providing a respectful, empowering educational model.

With the new lease in place, the school is now looking ahead, hoping to expand its facilities with new buildings - pending the success of its capital works funding application.

The school community is celebrating the bright future ahead for their school.



Landholder Ruth Partridge and Principal Kate Eastcott signed a new long-term lease for the Village School, with Lien Sim (Philosophy and Community Leader) and students Scarlett, Avalon, Charlotte, Isis, and Isla watching on.

Coastcare kicks off for 2025

ENVIRONMENT

Cowes Coastcare volunteers marked their third anniversary with a working bee on Sunday February 9, at McHaffie Drive.

The group holds a working bee on the second Sunday of each month.

"We cover weed removal, rubbish collection and annual tree planting at locations along the Cowes Foreshore," said co-coordinator Heather Liney.

"We have so far eradicated nearly all the Sea Spurge, a toxic invasive plant that inhibits other plants growing and in effect poisons other species.

"We just have a final area to tackle at the rear of the caravan park and have been grateful for the help of the Phillip Island Scouts and Cubs and also Newhaven College students in the weeding.

"Other plants to address include bone seed and agapanthus infestations, but



At the first working bee for Cowes Coastcare this year are, from left (back): Claire Miran Khan, Patsy Hunt, Maurice Schinkel, Chris Chavulak and Stephen Lightbody. Front: Marilyn Shaw (co-coordinator), Luke Fricke and Heather Liney (co-coordinator).

rebuilding a healthy foreshore is progressing very well thanks to the dedicated few."

Heather said anyone interested in coming along can join the Cowes Coastcare Facebook group, email maz4shaw@gmail. com or connect via the Phillip Island Land Alliance website: www.phillipislandlandcare.org.au/ phillip-island-land-alli-

"We thank Council for ongoing support and the community for helping look after the very precious foreshore."











Hectic Celebration of Surf goes off with a Bang

SURFING

The raucous second iteration of Bang Bang Bar and Food and Hectic's Annual Celebration of Surf saw hundreds of locals and surf enthusiasts from across the state descend on Cape Woolamai.

The event, which was headlined by local surf-rock band the Alley Stranglers, was a heaving testament to community passion and spirit. Stalls which included vintage surfboards, records, and clothing were set up by a score of local small businesses and shapers.

Spearheaded by Pat O'Garey, owner of Bang

Bang Bar and Food, and Hectic's Lindsay Becker, the day braved initially adverse weather to become a vibrant celebration of surf culture which saw smiles all round.

"It was an amazing day with amazing people," said Pat O'Garey.

"It was the second one we've done and we just really like putting it on for the community, to bring people to-gether to enjoy drinks, good music, sick surfboards and a grouse time."

Several die-hard surf enthusiasts travelled from across the state to join in the day's celebrations.

"It's definitely growing,"

said Pat.

"It's just great for people to come from all over to show their boards and also see the great little community we have here in Cape Woolamai."

Local music legend Marty Rutherford opened the stage for the Alley Stranglers who sent the local crowd into a charging frenzy, with many singing along.

Bespoke boards shaped by Xavier Ambrosius and clothing from Surf Beach collective DeadSun Surf Co saw a drove of crew out in force representing the fast-emerging brand and supporting their



Flynn Batterham, Kasia Kersley and Brodie Bush were out in support of fast-emerging bespoke board and clothing brand, DeadSun Surf Co.



With thanks to the Phillip Island & San Remo Advertiser for their continued support





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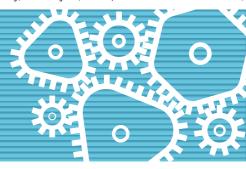




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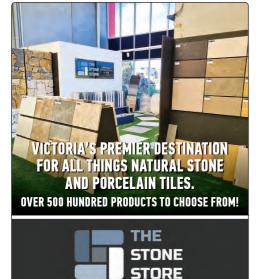
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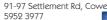
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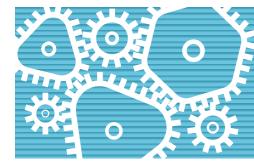
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DEATHS

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You worked so hard to look after your family. You were always there for us we cannot be more proud of you.

Dad you will be very missed by us your family.

Merle looked after you right to the end.

The 14 months you battled the brain cancer was not easy.

> Now you can rest in peace.

Love, Steven and Sarah and Merle Ecuyer

ECUYER, Rodney:

Thankyou for being an exceptional wonderful man with an infectious smile which will forever be missed.

It was a honour and a privilege to call you my father, father inlaw and pa. We hope your mind is now at rest and you will forever be in our hearts. Kisses, love you pa, hooroo.

Love Michelle, Glenn and Georgia

ECUYER, Rodney:

23/11/50 - 11/2/25 Dad,

After 15 months you're finally resting peacefully.

The memories we made with you in your final days will be treasured for ever.

Thank you.

Thank you for being my dad.

Thank you for everything you did for me

And thank you for being the best Pa to Keira, Zahli and Logan.

Go and enjoy a cold beer with Granddad

Love you for ever.

Rachael, Alex, Keira, Zahli and Logan.

ECUYER, Rodney James 'Rod':

23.11.1950 - 11.02.2025 Loved husband of Merle Loved father to Steven, Rachael & Michelle.

Loved Pa of Keira, Zahli. Logan & Georgia.

Passed away peacefully after a long battle with brain cancer.

DEATHS

McCARTHY, Margaret Louise "Greta":

Passed away peacefully on Feb. 12, 2025 in her 90th year.

Loved wife of Bart (dec.).

Loved and adored mother and motherin-law of Rick & Cheryl (dec.), Sandra & Neal, Wendy & Andrew. Cherished Grandma to Caroline, Jacqui; Tracey, Jessica, Brendan; Daniel, Cassidy, and Michael. Great Grandma to Jackson, Harrison, and Ryan.

Always Treasured

Forever in our Hearts

WILLIAMS, Donald Thomas:

8.11.34 - 12.2.2024 in Brisbane.

Don has lived in Marabello Aged Care Victoria Point for the last 3 years.

Brother in Law of Colin Niven (dec) and Joy.

Uncle of David & Stuart (Dec).

Memories to hold and treasure

"Reunited with Val"

Sleep peacefully Don

ZINN-ZINNENBURG, **Charlotte:**

Passed away peacefully

mother of the writer,

Prof. Khadija Zinnenburg

Carroll and friend of

Archie Bunker. Before

she moved to Phillip

Island in her last years

she was an actress in

European theatres, a

gallerist in New York,

traveller and collector.

She is remembered

by all who met her

around the world as an

extraordinary person.

Her house in Princeton

Avenue, Cape Woolamai

will become an artist

residency, where a wake

will be held on March

1st from 3 pm.

As per Charolotte's

wishes a private

cremation was held.

at home on Feb. 9, 2025 Charlotte was known to roar about the island in her old Subaru, to walk her dog Lippy and play with her grandson Piju. for Mitch Baker. She was the beloved

The Phillip Island Jake Eisen for generously providing the venue and staff.

Mon Dieu Cafe and Gav for the lovely food.

The Shearing Shed, the service.

Handley & Anderson funeral directors, Sharon, Joelene and Scott for being flexible, caring and sensitive.

And to everyone

FUNERALS

ECUYER:

The Funeral Service for Mr Rodney James Ecuyer will be held at The Shearing Shed, 116 Gap Road, Cowes, on MONDAY (February 24, 2025) commencing at 1:30pm

At the conclusion of the service the funeral will leave for the Phillip Island Cemetery.

Rod's service will be live-streamed, go to www.handleyandanderson-funerals. com.au

Handley <u>Ande</u>rson

McCARTHY:

A Memorial Service to Celebrate the Life of Mrs. Margaret Louise (Greta) McCarthy will be held at St. John's Uniting Church, Chapel Street, Cowes on FRIDAY (Feb. 21, 2025) commencing at 1:00pm.

Privately Cremated

Greta's service will be live-streamed, go to www.handleyandandersonfunerals.com.au



BEREAVEMENT THANKS

BAKER, Mitch:

Ashley, Steve and Deb Youle, Zena, Craig and Callum Baker would like to give a heartfelt thank you to the following people and businesses for helping to make the most beautiful send off

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else who helped and contributed on the day.

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

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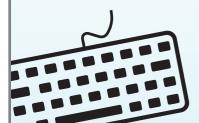
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Clear up the footpaths

Dear Bass Coast Shire Council (BCSC), in most other municipalities footpath trading is confined to clearly marked areas (with markers inset into the footpath) and regular policing. Not so with BCSC.

Souvenir footpath trading at the bottom end of Thompson Avenue Cowes

is out of control.

Not only are traders placing items along their shopfronts as well as on the other side of the footpath (greatly restricting the walking area on a crowded footpath) but they have also spread into the footpath widening areas and seating areas, making it unpleasant for our older citizens to sit and enjoy the view.

This tack everywhere does bother our premier shopping street.

Can we please, please do something about this. *Jeff Floyd*, Cowes

Commitment to brain health

In 2025 there are an estimated 110,600 people living with dementia in

Victoria and without a significant intervention, this is expected to increase to an estimated 216,400 by 2054.

That's why Dementia Australia is leading a call for a national conversation on dementia and brain health to raise community awareness of dementia, combined with more targeted and effective supports for people impacted by dementia.

Taking this dual approach will ensure we are working towards reducing the impact of all forms of dementia.

Dementia Australia is here 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. If you or a loved one have a diagnosis of dementia, or mild cognitive impairment, or you're concerned about changes to your cognition or that of a loved one, contact the National Dementia Helpline on 1800 100 500.

Professor Tanya Buchanan, CEO Dementia Australia

Wildlife concerns

In the past 12 months, residents of Silverleaves have noticed an increased popu-

lation of rabbits and wallabies to the point of plague proportions. It was not common to see wallabies grazing on a vacant block in daylight 10 years ago however, this has become the norm.

My wife recently traveling down Coghlan Road at night hit a wallaby at around 60km/h and damaged the total front of her car. Luckily, she was ok but shaken a little.

The Bass Coast Shire Council is aware of the problem but what are they doing about it?

Rabbit baiting has been carried out in the past and does have an effect, but the wallaby situation is new to us.

Can the council do something about some sort of control please before a serious fatality may happen.

Eden White, Silverleaves

Editor's note: Phillip Island Nature Parks is the lead agency for wildlife control on the island. In an update released in June 2024, it reported there were 17 permits issued to cull 415 wallabies in the previous year.



Newhaven College Year 12 Leadership for 2025, led by captains Gabriel de Falco, Abby Papas, Isaac Savona and Grace Howlett. More photos at pisra.com.au/education

Newhaven College Student Leaders 2025

EDUCATION

Student leaders were introduced at their final assembly in 2024. All the students in attendance offered their support.

The Junior School Captains for 2025 are:

- Captains: Dallas Latham, Nate Kondarios, Peyton Rhee and Venus Herath Mudiyanselage.
- House Captains: Mila Potter, Coco Russo, Bridget Doig, Levi Naarden, Billy Kimber, Ruby Pirouet, Georgia Evans and Austin Lynch.
- Performing Arts Captains: Lucy Pedersen and Audrey Mantel.
- Wellbeing Captains: Indy Van Damme and Savannah James.
 The Middle School Captains for 2025 are:
- Captains: Indi Maloney and Lucy Thompson
- House Captains: Abi Derham, Chinasa Okali, Isabella Lynch, Evie Hollings, Seb Di Falco, Hunter Jansen, Annabel Schwartz and Maggie Fisher.
- Music Captain: Charlee Pedersen.
- Wellbeing Captains: Georgia Kesterton and Bonnie McBride.



Middle School Captains for 2025: led by Captains Indi Maloney and Lucy Thompson.

- Drama Captain: Ned Scott.
- Sports Captains: Ambrose de Gooyer and Indi Keady.

The Year 12 Leadership team consist of:

- College Captains: Abby Papas, Gabriel de Falco, Isaac Savona and Grace Howlett.
- House Captains: Marley Brown, Charlotte Derham, Jasper Cashman, Nissa Campbell Walker, Jasmine Crooks, Andrew Nowell, Grace Morris and Matilda Russell.
- Sport: Finn O'Brien and

- Lara Smyth.
- Drama: Cecily de Gooyer.
- Music: Cecily de Gooyer and Archie Robson.
- Visual Arts: Sienna Bell.Wellbeing: Lola Afford and Bailie Patton.
- Social Justice: Indigo Aurora and Joey Thompson
- Environment & Sustainability: Thomas Scott.

The college community congratulates the 2025 student leaders and looks forward to seeing them all develop their leadership skills over the coming year.



Junior School Captains for 2025.



Andi and Heidi battled through a wet and windy swimming event on the weekend

SGB battles on in tough conditions

SWIMMING

It was a wild weekend of racing for the SGB swimmers, heading off in two different directions.

Eight of the experienced swimmers headed to MSAC at Albert Park to compete at the 2025 Mattoli Open Championships.

The entry list was full of Olympians, National Champions as well as the SGB swimmers who enjoyed racing against the tough competition, holding their own and enjoying the experience.

2s Company: 1st place

Palms, 2nd place King Pins and 3rd place on 3pts

ABL: 1st place on 27pts

Storm, 2nd place on 24pts

The Fireballs and 3rd

Business Early: 1st place of Fury.

place on 22pts Pinpals.

BOWLING

Meanwhile, 55 swimmers raced at Sale at the Gippsland All Juniors Trials. The top eight swimmers in each stroke over 50m, for age groups 8-16 years, will now head to the State Finals in March to compete against the other regional districts' top eights. Twenty-six of the swimmers progressed to the next level.

The weather was far from ideal, with heavy rain pelting swimmers as they raced and the wind whipping up waves making it a challenge, but the

on 6pts NTC, 2nd place on

5pts Balls Deep, 3rd place

on 4pts Old Timers and

4th: place on 3pts Wooly

Business Late: 1st place on

4pts City Lights, 2nd place

on 3pts S&R Clarke, 3rd

place on 3pts Team Rich

and 4th place on 0pts Balls

Tenpin League results

swimmers gave their best - many not wanting to get out of the pool after racing, as it was warmer in than out.

Coaches Sam and Lorri were so impressed with their efforts.

"These are some of the worst conditions I have seen swimmers compete

"These little eight-yearolds, trying to swim butterfly over 50m, some for the first time, have shown such resilience and I am so proud of them," said

Another fantastic turnout for our card's night with seven tables complete.

Ladies winner: Caroline with six wins.

Men's winner: Tony

Encouragement award: Alan Buck.

Euchre results

with seven wins.

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Phillip Island's Annual Open

Last week, croquet players arrived on Phillip Island from various clubs in the Melbourne metro and regional Victoria areas to compete in the annual Phillip Island Open Association Tournament at the club's Blue Gum Reserve croquet lawns.

The first day of competition commenced with the Island Club President, Claire Earl, welcoming the competitors and wishing them well in all their games.

The games then got underway with spectators witnessing some great croquet shots and brilliant hoop scoring throughout the tournament.

At the conclusion of the tournament, the President thanked all competitors for their support and participation in the annual event.

All scores were then tallied and winners and runners-up were announced and presented with their awards by President Claire as follows:

Block A: Simon Watkins (Brighton CC) and R/ up Matt Mackay (Traralgon CC).

Block A1: Matt Mackay (Traralgon CC) and R/up Colin Crawford (Traralgon CC).

Block B: Andrew Moulton (Brunswick CC) and R/up Charles Armstrong (Traralgon CC).

Block C: Fiona McLaren (Kew CC) and R/up Claire Earl (Phillip Island CC).



Block A: Simon Watkins (Brighton CC) and runner-up Matt Mackay (Traralgon CC).



Block A1: Matt Mackay (Traralgon CC) and R/up Colin Crawford (Traralgon CC).



Block B: Andrew Moulton (Brunswick CC) and R/up Charles Armstrong (Traralgon CC).

Results from the green

GOLF

Tuesday February 11 Men's Stableford 18H 9H X 2

Overall winner: Tony Vollebregt (30) 40 pts c/b.

A Grade winner: A-1 Hayden Bruce (8) 37 Pts

B Grade winner: B-1 Stephen Mack (16) 40 Pts

C Grade winner: C-1 Tony Vollebregt (30) 40 pts

BDL to 34 points c/b. NTP: 5th and 17th Rob

Haydon, 7th Alf Micallef and 10th Tony Vollebregt.

Men's Stableford 9H

Overall winner: Chris Hailes (36) 21 pts from Robert Leak (34) 20. BDL to 15 pts c/b.

Wednesday February 12 Saturday February 15

Women's 4BBB Stableford Overall winner Megan Elbaz and Patricia Jamieson 44 pts.

From Dawn Andrews and Alice Schofield 43 pts c/b.

BDL to 42 pts c/b.

NTP 5th Adrianne Anglin, 7th Helen Coghlan, 10th Jillian Chandler and 17th Michelle Pardoe.

Women's 9 Hole Stableford Overall winner: Kerrie Deaton (41) 17 pts c/b from Lorraine Brown (37) 17 pts Chris Lawrence.

BDL: 14 pts c/b.

Thursday February 13

Open Stableford 18H Overall, Winner: Peter McCallum (37) 44 pts.

Daniel Pearce (2) 38 pts. B Grade winner: B-1

A Grade winner: A-1

Neil Williams (16) 39 pts. C Grade winner: C-1 eter McCallum (37)

Peter BDL to 34 points c/b. NTP: 5th Scott Leth-

bridge, 7th Art Lyons, 10th John Diare and 17th Anthony Shannon.

Men's 9 Hole Stableford Winner: Chris Hailes (36) 20 pts from Vic Mitchell (26) 19 pts c/b.

BDL to 17 pts

Men's Comp Stableford 18H

Overall winner: Brandon Llovd (18) 39.

A Grade winner: A-1 Brad Granger (9) 36 pts.

B Grade winner: B-1 Brandon Lloyd (18) 39 pts. C Grade winner: C-1 Jack Keating (21) 35 pts c/b

BDL to 32 c/b. NTP: 5th Jack Ross, 7th Robert Fabiny, 10th Caffieri and 17th

A Grade Winner: Megan Elbaz (27) 32 pts from Adrianne Anglin (13) 30 pts c/b.

Women's Stableford 18H

NTP: 5th Adrianne Anglin, 7th Helen Coghlan, 10th n/a and 17th Megan Elbaz.

Open 9 Hole Stableford no comp.

Sunday February 16 Heritage Day Mixed 4BBB

Winners: Patricia and Mark Jamieson 47 pts from David and Michelle Pardoe 42 pts.

BDL 39

Women's 4BBB Stableford 18H

Winners: Marlen Gibson and Mary Taylor 43 pts from Helen Coghlan and Vicki Roff-Smith 41 pts.

NTP: 5th n/a, 7th Jillian Chandler, 10th Vicki Amato and 17th Mary Taylor.

Men's 4BBB Stableford 18H Winners: Connor Epifano and Alf Micallef 44 pts c/b from John Gill and Mark Griffin 44 pts.

BDL 38 pts c/b.

NTP: 5th Daniel Pearce, 7th Alf Micallef, 10th Chris Lawrence and 17th Craig O'Neil.

Sharks continuing to build

CRICKET

A Grade

Phillip Island hosted Koonwarra in their round 12 clash at the Cowes cricket ground.

Captain Mock won the toss and decided Koonwarra could bowl first on a slow and slightly damp Cowe's oval.

Epifano and Cleeland opened up and got the Island off to a solid start, with runs hard to come by on the lush but slow outfield.

Epifano was continuing his patch of form before an unfortunate injury forced him to retire on 25 not out.

Johnston joined Cleeland and continued to build the innings, with Cleeland showing his trademark placement and power.

The two took the score past 100 before Cleeland departed for a well-made 69.

The score 1-108 after 39.

Mock and Johnston got to the tea break and with wickets in the shed, decided to up the tempo against the tiring Koonwarra attack.

With aggression, unfortunately came wickets with Mock being the rock of the innings for the Sharks.

Small contributions from Johnston (17), Niven (12), and Beaumont (10) guided the Sharks well beyond 200 with Mock again in the runs with 78.

The Island finished up 9-252 after their 75.

The following week saw the rain finally arrive in South Gippsland with Cowes copping a battering in the hours before the game.

What was brilliant to see, was the endeavour from players and umpires to do everything they could to ensure some cricket could be played.

This including tarps, brooms and vacuum cleaners all to soak up and prevent water remaining on the pitch.

Koonwarra did their part by showing their interest to play, seeing as they made the effort to drive onto the Island.

The rain did penetrate with play delayed to 2pm and a 67 over innings.

This meant that Koonwarra could bat their overs out and aim for a draw, and that the Sharks had to take all 10 wickets for the

Early wickets to Tim Niven, Royal and McCausland made the task even harder for Koonwarra, however they remained to task with batsmen setting themselves up to bat the day out. Royal struck just before the tea break and Lane just after to have the visitors 5-38 after 35.

Another partnership was formed, and it seemed the draw was growing momentum, until a masterstroke from captain Mock changed the wicket keeping duties over and the ball into the cult figure Black's hands.

Usually one to be whipping bails off, it was Black who trapped the opener leg before in his first over which changed momentum in the game.

From there, with Tom Niven bowling well down the hill, the Island wrapped up the tail with 10 overs to go, to remain well and truly in the finals hunt.

Niven ended up with three along with Black picking up another one late that will no doubt be talked about for years to come.

The Island remain at home for the next game against Imperials, with two rounds to go before finals begin.

B Grade

The Sharks headed to Meeniyan to take on bottom placed MDU looking to shore up a top two fin-

Skipper Andrew Finlayson lost the toss yet again and MDU elected to bat.

Young guns Jobe Williams and Harry Arceo opened the bowling and although they bowled well, the first wicket eluded them. A bowling change saw Heath Womersley grab the first wicket of the day.

The next 90 minutes was hard work as the bowlers had little luck; the MDU batsmen punishing every loose ball which were on offer a little too frequently.

With the tea break looming and the score 1/126 Tony Hornsby was thrown the ball, his off spin breaking the partnership with a cracking one-handed catch taken by Loz Ferrari at a strange slip/gully combo position he had just invented.

The MDU skipper was in next, and Horns offered him a juicy full toss first ball that he duly belted straight at Tom Blackwell who had the ball ricochet off his thigh and wedge between his elbow and ribs for a miraculous catch. Sharks went to tea a lot happier with the score 3/126.

After tea the Sharks bowled a much better line and length, all the bowlers combining to dismiss MDU for 216 in 58 overs, Jobe Williams and Justin Tran grabbing three wickets

With 12 overs to face Tony Hornsby opened with Heath, Horns unfortunately falling for 12. Tom Blackwell joining Heath as the pair got the Sharks to stumps with the score 1/30.

Day two saw the Sharks greeted with arctic conditions. The rain having slowed up the outfield and rain delays throughout the day made it tough work for both sides.

Tom and Heath negotiated the start of the day fantastically and just as they were picking up the pace, Blackers missed a full one and was out for 20 with the score 2/59.

Tharidu was in next and after a rain delay as well, he was dismissed for five and the Island

Max Arceo was in next and immediately the young batsmen began to put the pressure on the MDU fielders, taking quick singles and keeping the scoring rate ticking over.

As the lunch break drew closer, they also started to pick off some loose bowling, Max in particular hitting the boundary on multiple occasions. The pair got to the tea break with the score 3/140.

After the resumption the boys picked up where they left off, Max bringing up his fifty, a great knock in the conditions.

Soon after Max fell LBW bringing an end to a 93-run partnership that had turned the game in the Sharks' favor.

Loz was in next and as he settled in; Heath brought up his first ever half century to the delight of his teammates.

Loz was just starting to look to attack when he was out for five. Justin Tran now in with the score 5/177.

Heath and Justin took the score past 200 and with the finish line in reach, Heath played his first loose shot of the day and unfortunately found a fielder, ending his brilliant knock of 80 off 169 balls.

Skipper Finlayson was up and as soon as he arrived, Justin departed, the score now 7/203 and the 14 needed to win was looking for a long way away.

Jobe Williams was now in, and the nervous Sharks players watching on need not have worried, as the pair calmly ticked off the runs required, delivering a great win in tough batting con-

The Island win sees a threeway tie for top spot on the ladder. A huge clash with Wonthaggi next week will see the winner lock up a top two finish.



Congratulations to the Women's cricket team for securing a place in the PIDCC Women's cricket Grand Final. The team is pictured with coaches Mick and Dean.

Women's team through to the Grand Final

CRICKET

The wintery blast on Saturday didn't prevent the PIDCC Women's Semi-final against Inverloch starting on time.

In true form, Captain Bec lost the toss, and the Island women were sent out to field.

Young Gun Sienna opened the bowling with class and Winnie with pace.

Grace soon claimed the first wicket through Jane's catch at square leg.

Kate then had a sensational over with two wickets, including clean bowling the opposition and a catch by B at point.

Jess also claimed two wickets of her own, with a run out and a nick caught in the safe hands of wicket keeper Rosanna.

Jane and Sienna's second overs claimed a wicket each, while B, Claudia and Bec restricted the Inverloch run rate.

At the end of the innings, Inverloch were 81.

Grace and Sienna opened the batting in great form, with Grace hitting three well placed boundaries.

The Island were 22 after four

The dynamic running of Jane and Kate, as well as several perfectly placed boundaries by each batswoman, saw the Island's total reach 51 after eight overs.

Jess and Claudia kept the scoreboard ticking over, and B and Bec continued the run scoring with B whacking two boundaries.

The Island were 86 with one pair to go.

Rosanna and Winnie ran well, with Rosanna hitting a boundary through mid-wicket.

The Island cruised past the Inverloch total, with a 30-run

The Island women now progress to the Grand Final on Sunday, February 23. Congratulations to Grace,

receiving the LDCA Semi Final Player of the match. Congratulations to Grace and

Kate; top scoring with 16 and 14

The pick of the bowlers was Kate 2/11 (3), Jess 2/12 (2) and Grace 1/8 (2).

Congratulations to Phillip Island Ten Pin Bowling and Entertainment Centre Player of the Match: Kate.



Grace was the LDCA semi-final player of the match.

Phillip Island Bowling club Summer Triples

BOWLS

With brilliant sunshine and both greens full of bowlers from all over the district the standard of bowling was exceptional. Runners up for the day were Pat Ryan, Kevin Brown and Graeme Cor-

Congratulations our winners Terry Floyd. **Brookes**



Michael Dady and Chris Winners of the Summer Triples bowls (from left) Terry Floyd and Michael Dady (Chris Brookes absent).





Mark Griffin (right) and Harley Griffin (left) were both triumphant in the weekend's competition. Mark won the secret weight prize with a 285-gram King George whiting, and Harley was in a three-way tie for first place in the Squidgies Mixed Bag competition, catching one fish worth



Denver Firth won the Junior Weight competition with a 570-gram pike.



Tenille Preddice won the Female Senior Points Competition with a King George whiting worth 1596 points (570 grams).



Duncan Firth won the Male Senior Points competition with a King George whiting worth 1736 points (620 grams)

Valentines Day at Rhyll Angling Club

FISHING

This past weekend, the Rhyll Phillip Island Angling Club (RPIAC) hosted its eagerly anticipated nineth angling competition, marking another interesting chapter in the 2024/2025

season. The event, held on February 15 and 16, saw anglers of all ages shaken but not stirred, under conditions that could only be described as challenging for the

sport. As the competition kicked off at the stroke of midnight on Friday, just after Valentine's Day finished, participants were greeted with difficult weather conditions, featuring strong winds, rain, and hail.

The clubrooms buzzed with activity during the 4pm to 5pm weigh-ins on Saturday and Sunday where anglers presented their prized catches as supporters were bemused.

With a total of 21 fish and one shark entered in the competition, there were stories of both disappointment and success.

Eligible species, encountered over the weekend included King George whiting, snapper, flathead, pike, and gummy shark.

The RPIAC Extraordinary Catch Incentives for eligible species, caught by members on competition weekends, stay banked with three more competitions remaining.

With only one of the \$1000 first-to-catch prizes claimed this season, anglers remain optimistic about catching a remaining eligible species that equals or exceeds the nominated weight: snapper (10kg), Gummy shark (20kgs), mulloway (25kgs) and kingfish (25kgs).

RPIAC welcomes young anglers, offering complementary membership to children aged 16 and under, encouraging them to develop their skills and awareness of sustainable and responsible angling.

Results

The post-competition presentation awards celebrated the out-

standing efforts of all angling members.

Anglers aged nine and under, in the Squidgie Mixed Bag competition, excelled and outdid their peers.

Saige Nicolaci, Harley Griffin and Byron Griffin continued with their angling excellence and were thrilled with a three-way tie for first place in the Squidgies' competition, each catching one fish worth 20 points.

The Junior Weight and Junior Points competitions, for anglers aged 10 to 16, also showcased the upcoming talent within the club, with Denver Firth taking home the heaviest weight prize for his impressive 570-gram pike.

Gus Fahnle triumphed in the junior points category with a King George whiting, amassing 204 points for a 430-gram fish, demonstrating skill in tough conditions.

The Senior Heaviest Weight competitions were no less competitive.

Brendan Garlepp claimed the male category's Senior Heaviest

Weight prize with a 1275-gram snapper.

Carrianne Peatey won the female Senior Heaviest Weight prize after she caught a snapper weighing 1115 grams.

The Senior Points competitions were won by Duncan Firth and Tenille Preddice, each catching King George whiting, worth 1736 points (620 grams), and 1596 points (570 grams), respectively.

Despite an abundance of mini gummies in Westernport, one gummy met the RPIAC criteria of a partial length greater than 60cm.

The best of the weekend, with a clean weight of 3415 grams, was caught by Nigel Firth to win the shark prize.

The Squid/Cuttlefish and Gamefish competitions were uncontested.

The Secret Weight Competition saw Mark Griffin closest to the mark with a King George Whiting that weighed in at 285 grams (secret weight 252

The event concluded on a high note on Sunday, with the club providing a delightful meal of roast chicken and salad for its members, celebrating the community spirit and the shared passion for angling.

With thanks to all volunteers, including Matt, Chris, and Nikky, no one left hungry or dehydrated, and the weekend's supporters certainly made this another successful competition.

The RPIAC clubroom is located adjacent to the Rhyll boat ramp and is open to members and visitors on Fridays (from 5pm) and competition weekends coinciding with weigh in.

The next angling competition is scheduled for the weekend of March 1 and 2.

There are still many opportunities to participate in the scheduled angling competitions and compete for comp-weekend prizes and enter the club championships.

For further information about the club, events, competitions, and rules: www.rpiac.com.

League gears up for its biggest year yet

DARTS

The Phillip Island and District Darts League (PIDDL) is set for an electrifying 2025 season after a hugely successful Annual General Meeting on Monday night.

With a record-breaking 10 teams registered, this year promises to be our biggest and best yet - a true showcase of high-class darts action.

The AGM was well attended,

with members reflecting on an outstanding 2024 season before turning their focus to an even more exciting future.

With 10 teams hitting the oche, all five boards will be in action each week, guaranteeing a buzzing atmosphere at the

Darts Centre. Leading the charge once again is the unchanged committee, re-elected for another year of steady leadership: Scott Lethbridge (President), Vince Palladino (Vice President), Meredith eted San Remo Butchers meat Parker (Treasurer) and Chris Chivers (Secretary).

Following the formalities, the night heated up with a highly competitive informal singles competition.

Darts were flying, and tensions were high as Anders Geier and Dave Healey faced off in the

In a thrilling battle, Dave emerged victorious with a 2-1 win, securing himself the covtray prize.

Well played, gents.

Coming up next ... The action continues this Monday night with the Owen Walton Drawn Doubles competition.

If you want in on the excitement, register at 7pm for a 7.30pm start.

Who will take home the title this time?

There's only one way to find out - see you at the Darts Centre.

Cowes Classic result update

The results of the Junior female category were inadvertently missed in our coverage of the Cowes Classic last week.

Congratulations to Abbey Clarke who won the Junior Female category overall, as well as the local category.

Second place went to Carol Kratzmann, with local Zoe Scott in third.

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Wild weather disrupts Catamaran challenge

SAILING

Gale force winds forced organisers of the Around French Island Catamaran Race to reschedule the event.

Originally due to start at 12 noon on Saturday, a decision was made to postpone the event until the following day, when the island was hit with squalls of up to 38 knots (70 kph) and low rain cloud taking away visibility,

Organisers deemed it unsafe to hold the competition, so the teams waited for more favourable conditions the following day.

A crowd of locals, including Mayor Cr Rochelle Halstead and Island Ward councillors Ronnie Bauer and Tracey Bell had gathered at the yacht club on the Saturday, only to hear the news the event couldn't go ahead.

Sunday arrived, still wet with strong winds, but organisers said all the sailors had stayed overnight, and were "very determined to take on the challenge".

Competitors had travelled from Port Phillip Bay, Gippsland, South Australia, New South Wales and for the first time three sailors from Tasmania had entered.

The race began in windy conditions, with wind increasing over the course of the race.

Several boats capsized before reaching Hastings and two were forced to retire early.

Others ran aground, suffering damage to rudders, as they battled to navigate through the narrow channels behind French Island.

As always the race was another epic battle with many race leader and division lead-



Island ward councillors Tracey Bell and Ronnie Bauer with Mayor, Cr Rochelle Halstead in Cowes on Saturday, where bad weather forced the Around French Island catamaran race to be postponed.

er changes, and tense racing down the final leg from Corinella back to Cowes.

In the final leg, many boats tipped over due to the strong wind gusts. One sailor was knocked off his boat which sailed off without him.

Thankfully another competitor, local sailor Ged Pepping quickly picked him up and together they chased down his boat, with both boats sailing on to finish the race.

James McDonald and Anton Schwarze on a F18 from Frankston Yacht Club secured the Ocean Reach award for the first boat across the line. They completed the course in a fast three and half hours.

The route, in a clockwise

direction around French Island is around 70 kilometres as the crow flies but closer to 100 kilometres was sailed.

The Overall Winner on handicap to secure the converted Isle of Wight Trophy was Ant Richards from Westernport Yacht Club on a Taipan.

Ant sailed yet another outstanding race and remarkably, he has now won the race three times in the past five years.

Results

This years 29th running of the Cowes Yacht Club Around French Island National Catamaran Challenge was the fourth super-sized event with \$10,000 prize money.

Division 1, sponsored by Australian Air Safaris

Winner: James McDonald and Anton Schwarze on a F18 and Line honours winner of the Ocean Reach award.

Second: Emma Rankin and Beau White on a F18. Emma was also the winner of the first female skipper award.

Third: Jeremy and Angus Brookes on a F18.

Division 2, sponsored by the Isle of Wight

Winner: Ant Richards on a Taipan 4.9 sloop.

Second: Simon Lyddieth on a Taipan 4.9 sloop.

Third: Shannan and Jack Wilson on a Mosquito Sloop.

Division 3, sponsored by Modra Technology

Winner: Gary Maskiell on

Second: Geoff Rowdon and Taylor Woodward on a Hobie

Third: Robert Lott on a Mosquito



Division 3, sponsored by Modra Technology. Winner Gary Maskiell, second Geoff Rowdon and Taylor Woodward and third Robert Lott.



Division 2, sponsored by the Isle of Wight. Winner Ant Richards, second Simon Lyddieth and third Shannan and Jack Wilson.



Division 1, sponsored by Australian Air Safaris. Director Tony Kirkhope (left) presenting the prize to the winners: James McDonald and Anton Schwarze, Emma Rankin and Beau White, and Jeremy and Angus Brookes.

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