

Country and Waters

Discover treasures
at local markets

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Image: Alex Shore

COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER | OCTOBER 2022

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surfcoast.vic.gov.au

Welcome to the first edition of Country and Waters, our new community newletter. This replaces Groundswell, and will be delivered four times a year.

Surf Coast Shire Council Acknowledges the Wadawurrung People, and the Gulidjan and Gadubanud Peoples of the Maar Nation as the Traditional Owners of the land we now call Surf Coast Shire.

We pay our respects to their Elders past and present, and all other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People who are part of our Surf Coast Shire community.

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Robin Costin, right, with Joan Steele at Wurdi Baierr Stadium.

Looking forward to Surf Coast Aquatic and Health Centre benefits

Robin Costin fully appreciates the benefits of hydrotherapy and warm water exercise.

Having experienced their therapeutic effects while recovering from a back injury she would love to see them become available at Surf Coast Shire Council's planned Surf Coast Aquatic and Health Centre.

"Warm water exercise was what the specialist recommended and I would walk in the pool at Waurin Ponds for half an hour or so," Robin said.

"I was rapt with the results. We want more options for that here on the Surf Coast."

Concept plans for the Surf Coast Aquatic and Health Centre include two indoor warm water pools, measuring about 20x10 metres, which would offer great scope for hydrotherapy and exercise classes for people of all ages.

They would also provide for much-needed learn-to-swim activities.

"We have a lot of young kids who need to know how to swim. We've got the beach but they need somewhere to learn," Robin said.

Now back into her regular FitForever and Powerbar classes at Torquay's Wurdi Baierr Stadium, Robin, 70, is excited by plans to have the Aquatic and Health Centre next door.

Plans for the centre also include:

- A gymnasium, multipurpose exercise areas and allied health suites which will deliver health and wellbeing benefits while providing much-needed revenue
- A 25-metre outdoor seasonal pool, with provision for it to be enclosed in the future
- Accessible change rooms and amenities

The centre has been a long-held community ambition, aligning with our Council Plan theme of fostering a healthy, connected community.

Council has committed \$5.75 million to the project, combining with funding of \$20 million from the Australian Government and \$13.5 million from the Victorian Government, but a further \$7.5 million is required to make it a reality.

We are seeking community support in advocating for the extra funding and asking potential users to let politicians know how much the centre will mean for community health and wellbeing.

People can visit surfcoast.vic.gov.au/pool to learn more about the project, see the plans and find a link to easily email politicians in the lead into the Victorian election.



Hands up who's excited: Surf Coast Football Club juniors celebrate the pavilion upgrade. Photo: Michael Chambers

Clubs and community getting a kick out of pavilion upgrades

Community connections will be front and centre at Surf Coast Football Club (SCFC), thanks to a Grant Pavilion upgrade that has delivered a new social space and grandstand.

The club played a key role in the project, working with Surf Coast Shire Council to develop plans, lobbying the state government for a \$2 million contribution, and pledging a \$100,000 commitment itself.

Surf Coast Football Club President Brett King praised the finished project, which consists of the social room, grandstand overlooking the three pitches at Banyul Warri-Fields in Torquay, a canteen, kitchen, administrative space and storage.

Mr King highlighted the dedicated female change rooms, the roller door storage area that will save time for club volunteers, and the social space which will cater for the SCFC's 500-plus member base.

"We've always had great playing facilities and now these clubrooms mean we have a great place to call home. We believe our club has a big role in growing social connections in the community, and this upgrade will help us fulfil that," he said.

The project will also benefit other users in the Banyul Warri-Fields precinct, with

two new change rooms, two new umpire rooms, two refurbished umpire rooms and four accessible toilets.

Meanwhile, the Moriac community is enjoying a new multi-use pavilion - another project that aligns with our goal to foster a thriving, connected, healthy community.

The netball and tennis pavilion features female friendly change rooms and amenities, a social space, umpires room, enhanced viewing areas, kitchen facilities, administration space and first aid area. The project was a team effort between Council, the state government and the Moriac and district community which fundraised a \$10,000 contribution.



HAVE YOUR SAY

Your contribution makes a difference. We regularly seek community feedback and input on a wide range of Council projects.

Find out about current community engagement opportunities at surfcoast.vic.gov.au/YourSay.



Have you downloaded SCRRApp yet?
(Surf Coast Rubbish and Recycling app)

AVAILABLE TO DOWNLOAD FREE





Isla (far left) takes part in the Mother Goose program with Hazel, William, Jemima and Matilda.

Winchelsea market returns



Winchelsea Market is on the first Sunday of each month.

The power of playgroups

When Lisa Stewart moved from Melbourne to Jan Juc in 2019, her local connections were limited.

"We didn't know anyone, which is why Mothers' Group was such a big deal for me after having our first child Matilda," she said. "Going through the pandemic while pregnant with our second child, I knew that when I finally had the opportunity to go to social groups, I had to make the most of it."

While at a Maternal Child Health check, Lisa learnt of the Parent-Child

Mother Goose Program at Kurrambee Myaring Community Centre in Torquay. She has since become a regular attendee at the weekly session with six-month-old daughter Isla.

The program focuses on the use of oral rhymes, songs and stories, with parents and caregivers participating with their babies and young children.

"We've loved it," she said. "It's great for us mums, to make social connections and to share advice and local knowledge."

Surf Coast Shire Council's Early Years service has grown since the start of the pandemic, thanks to a local baby boom. There was a 27 per cent increase in infants enrolled in the Maternal Child Health Service in 2021-22, compared to 2019-20.

We run about 20 first-time parent groups each year, as well as playgroup, parent education sessions and clinics across the shire including Mini Movers toddler sessions focused on child development. It all aligns with our goal to enable communities to strengthen their social connections and participate in community life.

SurfCoastEarlyYears

A hinterland gem is shining on the Surf Coast Events markets calendar, with the Winchelsea Market making a welcome return.

"It's a social celebration of all things good - food, family, friends and conversation," market coordinator Kim Johnson said.

"We had a fantastic turnout at our first one and we expect numbers to keep growing. It's a perfect Sunday activity, to whizz down to the market and see the various stalls - from local honey and a local native plant nursery, to baby clothes and vintage items, to the men's shed

BBQ and Country Women's Association goodies."

Located at the historic Winchelsea Shire Hall, the market is held the first Sunday of each month from 9am to 1pm. It has indoor and outdoor stalls.

"Seeing everyone at the first market, it felt like we had the community back together again after a tough couple of years," said Kim, a Growing Winchelsea committee member. "It's wonderful to see the locals and we look forward to welcoming visitors, especially for our December market ahead of Christmas."

Community markets are popular outings on the Surf Coast, with the 2022-23 schedule promising variety - morning, twilight, beachside or rural. They all help showcase local talent, while numerous markets are also community fundraisers for groups such as schools and Lions clubs. To see the upcoming markets, visit **surfcoastevents.com.au**.

To marketgoers, please remember to take your own bags and your own food and drink containers if you're able to, as part of our Plastic Wise Events and Markets Policy.

Seeking healing, not hurt

As Surf Coast Shire Council continues a journey towards Reconciliation with First Nations people, we seek ways to find healing, not hurt.

We seek truth and understanding, not ignorance. We need to recognise past wrongs.

First Nations Reconciliation is the first theme in our Council Plan, and accordingly Council has taken a step on that journey with its resolution to no longer participate in celebratory events on 26 January.

The change acknowledges that 26 January is a difficult day for First Nations people, as the threshold for European settlement in this country and the start of a decimation of First Nations culture, populations and ancestry, and the dispossession of Country carefully nurtured for millennia.

From 2022 we are no longer participating in celebratory events on 26 January, and on that day Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags will fly at half-mast.

We will conduct a citizenship ceremony on the day as it is an Australian Government requirement, but we are advocating for this requirement to change.

We are also now engaging with Traditional Owners and the First Nations community to discuss the potential for bringing together future mourning or survival events on 26 January.

Each of these actions demonstrate intention to no longer look away.

They demonstrate a wish to walk beside and gain deeper understanding, and are founded on deepest respect.

The upcoming calendar is packed full of events for locals and visitors to get inspired and get *amongst!*

For details on all the awesome events and markets happening on the Surf Coast, head to www.surfcoastevents.com.au.

While you are there you might like to enter the Surf Coast Events incredible spring competition to be in the draw to **WIN a dream two night stay at the iconic Pole House in Fairhaven on the Great Ocean Road.**

It's super easy, simply subscribe to our e-newsletter, follow a social and tag a friend. Hurry comp closes 4 Dec.



Markets

FIRST SUN OF EVERY MONTH | 9AM - 1PM
Winchelsea Community Market

EVERY SAT (except Boxing Day) | 8:30AM - 1PM
Torquay Farmers Market

20 NOV, 18 DEC, 15 JAN, 19 FEB | 10AM - 3PM
Torquay Cowrie Market

29 OCT, 20 NOV, 11 DEC, 1, 8, 15, 22 JAN, 12 FEB | 9AM - 1PM
Aireys Inlet Market

30 OCT, 1, 8, 14 JAN | 9AM - 4PM
(14 Jan twilight market 3pm - 8pm)
Anglesea Riverbank Market

4, 18 NOV, 2, 16 DEC, 6, 20 JAN, 3, 17 FEB | 4:30PM - 8PM
Anglesea Twilight Farmers Market

29 OCT, 28 JAN | 9AM - 4PM
Lorne Market

Keen to be "in the know" with events happening on the Surf Coast? Head to www.surfcoastevents.com.au
Sign up to the e-newsletter and follow: SurfCoastEvents SurfCoast_Events



Open letter from our Mayor

Can you help current and potential residents find somewhere to live?

The Surf Coast Shire is not alone in weathering the effects of worsening housing affordability. Like many other regional Victorian councils we have seen rental vacancy rates plummet, houses on the market snapped up in record time at record prices, and median rents skyrocket. These are indicators of a distressed private rental market.

I am penning this open letter because of the effect that these prevalent conditions are having on our community. I am making this plea to you because of the individuals and families who are being forced to leave our communities because they are unable to find a place to rent. Many of them have 'held on' as long as they could and now have no option but to pull their kids out of kinder or school, give up their voluntary and professional posts, and move away from family and friends.

On top of this, many of our local businesses are struggling to attract and retain workers and to keep their doors open to meet demand. Their staff provide vital services to our community in health and social support, in education and emergency services, or in hospitality, retail, construction and agriculture. These industries drive our economy and allow us to live prosperously in the towns and neighbourhoods we call home.

The childcare service in Lorne has had to close because it was unable to find staff, partly due to there being no affordable accommodation available in town for potential employees.

Recently, I was asked by media to comment on the release of 2021 ABS census data. In particular, the high number of unoccupied dwellings on Census night is considered to be indicative of houses sitting empty during the off-season and either used or rented out in the short-stay market over summer. I recognise that the Surf Coast Shire is a tourist destination and that overnight visitor stays significantly contribute to our economy and the financial wellbeing of residents. I know that having a house where family can gather when busy schedules permit is also really important, particularly when we have been separated from loved ones in the past few years due to the pandemic.

However, if you think that renting your second residence or holiday house out on the long-term rental market won't make a substantial difference to your family, I encourage you to consider it. Providing a home for locals will make a difference to the whole community, not just to the families and key worker households who get to stay. The impact is immediate and personal but also broader and longer term, a stronger social fabric and a diverse and more resilient economy. All of which stands us in good stead for the future.

If it feels like it might be possible to rent your property out longer term to locals, please consider it, and seek any relevant financial advice before contacting your local real estate agent.

If you'd like to discuss any aspect of my request or to find out more about Council's work in this space – including our Affordable Accommodation Action Plan 2022 – contact us at info@surfcoast.vic.gov.au or 5261 0600.

Yours sincerely,

Cr Libby Stapleton.

Would you prefer to receive your rates notice and this newsletter electronically?

Property owners can complete the online form at erates.surfcoast.vic.gov.au/erates.

After you have registered, your next rates notice and Country and Waters newsletter will be delivered to your inbox.



Bushfire risk: prepare yourself and your property



It is time to renew bushfire survival plans and prepare your property to minimise risk to yourself, your family and your community. Hot and dry conditions will see bushfire risk return to the Surf Coast Shire. This follows good winter rain that is likely to drive spring growth.

We encourage you to prepare your property at the earliest opportunity. You should reduce vegetation, with a focus on areas closest to your house. To help you prepare we have enclosed three green waste vouchers, valid until the end of January 2023. If you rent your property or have multiple owners, please forward this information and vouchers to the tenant or other owners.

Together, we all have a role to play in preparing for the season ahead. For further information on vegetation management and fire preparedness, visit surfcoast.vic.gov.au/FireReady, phone us on **5261 0600**, or contact CFA on **5240 2700**.

Have a plan

In the event of a fire you will need to act quickly and make decisions under pressure. A well thought-out and practiced plan is essential to your survival. The CFA website has information about preparing a Bushfire Survival Plan: cfa.vic.gov.au/plan-prepare/before-and-during-a-fire.

The basis of a good plan:

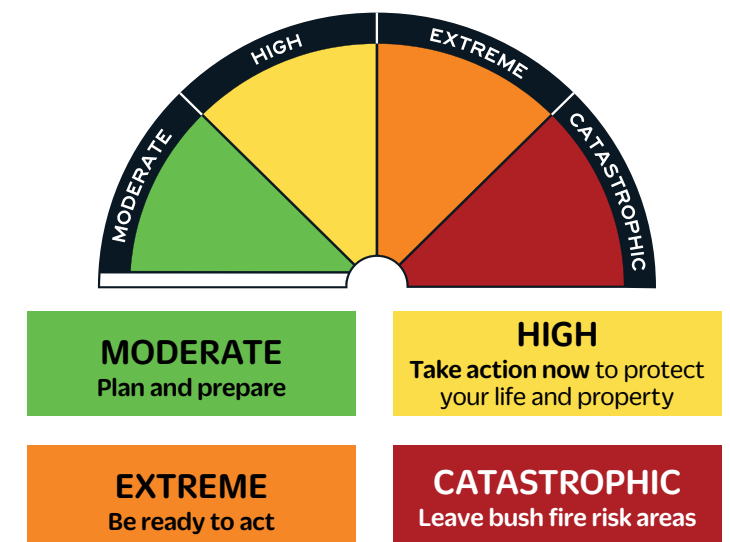
- understand the risk in your local area
- become familiar with the new fire danger rating system
- know what your trigger is going to be to leave and
- landscaping and garden maintenance (see the green waste voucher sheet for tips).

Stay informed

For your personal safety, it is vital that you stay informed about the weather and fire activity during the Fire Danger Period. CFA strongly encourages you to rely on more than one source of information. Verified information sources include:

- VicEmergency app (available for Android and Apple)
- Radio ABC 774 – Victoria's emergency broadcasters
- cfa.vic.gov.au
- VicEmergency Hotline **1800 226 226**
- Sky News television station

Fire Danger Ratings



Green waste disposal

Rather than burning off to dispose of your excess green waste, you can consider more environmentally-friendly options, such as:

- Green waste bins – did you know you can upgrade the size for a small fee?
- Green waste vouchers – we provide three vouchers to all properties.
- Composting at home.
- A contractor collecting and disposing of green waste at transfer stations.

Burning off contributes to carbon emissions and poor air quality. It also carries risk as local volunteer fire brigades may need to attend 'false calls' to burn offs, or attend if a burn off gets out of control. By choosing an alternative to burning off, you are showing care for your neighbours and community.

For further information visit surfcoast.vic.gov.au/FireReady



Dog waste bags

Surf Coast Shire Council's 12-month trial providing free dog waste bags at a range of popular public reserves seems to be proving a hit.

Dispensers have been installed at 18 locations across the shire since August – from Torquay soccer pitches to Mount Moriac Reserve, and Winchelsea Common to Lorne's Stribling Reserve.

Our Council Plan supports provision of social infrastructure and open space to enable healthy lifestyles.

Dog owners have used 11,000 of the bags across all locations during the first month alone, and waste complaints have declined significantly.

The new dispensers and bags are the first we have provided. Dispensers along coastal reserves are supplied and managed by the Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority.

We have been hearing lots of positive feedback and people have been making plenty of suggestions for more dispenser locations.

We are collecting usage data to help determine if we keep providing the bags beyond the 12-month trial.



Beach patrols back for summer

Surf Coast Shire Council's Ranger Services officers will be resuming regular Share Our Shores beach patrols this summer, helping to ensure people have safe, fun times along our spectacular coastline.

We run the patrols in partnership with the Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority from Boxing Day through to Easter, on foot and in our all-terrain vehicle, aiming to ensure that people observe local laws and coastal reserve regulations and take care of each other and the environment.

Areas of focus include observing of seasonal dog time share zone regulations, illegal camping, public safety and dune and wildlife protection.

We will also be reminding people that Surf Coast beaches are smoke-free, and encouraging people to take their rubbish home if public bins are full on busy days.

These actions all fit within our Council Plan themes of fostering a healthy, connected community and protecting our environment.

Grants program a huge hit

Fun, friendship and faster reflexes - pickleball is serving up numerous benefits for Marg Scott and Brian Conquest.

Marg and Brian are members of Torquay Pickleball Association, which is attracting new players to the rapidly-growing racquet sport. The association received a \$2,171 grant from Surf Coast Shire Council to purchase equipment to add a fourth session at Wurdi Baierr Stadium.

"I've played sport all my life so when pickleball came along, I gave it a go," Brian said.

It was also a new hobby for Marg. "I had never played racquet sports but the indoor element was appealing to me. I ended up having so much fun," she said.

There are more opportunities to apply for grants in our revitalised grants program, with a total \$122,500 available. Upcoming grants to mark in your calendar are Artists and Creatives (open February 2023) to foster an environment where people with clever and creative ideas can make a difference, and Climate Emergency (open March 2023) to empower community-led responses to the climate emergency.

Torquay Pickleball Association President Terry Kealey, who was rapt to receive a Council grant, welcomed interested new players to email torquaypickleball@gmail.com.



Marg and Brian are reaping the benefits of pickleball.

"It doesn't matter what age you are," he said. "Pickleball is a chance for people to come together, exercise, and be social. Come along to a free try on a Tuesday night or Tuesday, Thursday or Friday day session and see if you like it."

For details on our improved grants program, visit surfcoast.vic.gov.au/grants.

SURF COAST SHIRE COUNCIL

Wadawurrung Country

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Phone: **5261 0600** surfcoast.vic.gov.au/request

OFFICE HOURS: 8.30am to 5pm, Monday to Friday

If you require a printed copy of online information referred to in any story, please call **5261 0600**