

Country and Waters



Community takes lead on Bob Pettitt Bike Park revamp

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Pictured: Jan Juc teen Will Semple tests out the new bike park.

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Surf Coast Shire Council
Acknowledges the Wadawurrung
People, and the Gulidjan and
Gadubanud Peoples of the
Eastern 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.

'The best outcome' – Community welcomes change in aquatic and health centre scope



Former swimming instructor and surf life saver Colin Fowler (pictured) loves his daily dose of salt water and waves but couldn't be happier now that he has an alternative on the way for the depths of winter.

Having spent more than 15 years advocating for an indoor pool for Torquay he finally has his wish with confirmation of a 25m indoor pool within the scope for the new Surf Coast Aquatic and Health Centre.

"I still go swimming in the morning down in the surf 12 months of the year but if I've got a warm pool I might – not might, I will – partake there in the middle of winter," he says.

"Most of the people I know will be using it at some stage, for fitness or if the weather is no good.

"We now have an alternative to the surf, which will be great."

Plans for the Surf Coast Aquatic and Health Centre, SCAHC, now include:

- Indoor 25m pool.
- One 20x10m warm water program pool.
- Allied health suites, program spaces, gym, café and supporting amenities.

Colin is president of the long-running Surf Coast Aquatic Leisure Centre Action Group and sees the broad importance for people of year-round access to learn to swim lessons, lap and squad swimming, hydrotherapy and warm water exercise.

"This is one of the few facilities a council builds that is open to everybody, from babies up to octogenarians," he says.

Council resolved at its February meeting to change the scope of the project following confirmation that a community pool will remain in Armstrong Creek as a legacy from hosting 2026

Commonwealth Games aquatic events.

The previous project scope, approved before Commonwealth Games venue announcements, included an outdoor 25m pool and two indoor warm water program pools.

The change in scope recognised predicted impact on SCAHC patronage due to the Armstrong Creek centre, better reflected our community's projected need and responded to community feedback.

Council will also underwrite the existing project funding shortfall to enable it to go to tender. The centre aligns with our Council Plan theme of fostering a healthy, connected community.

Colin says community reaction to the change in scope has been overwhelmingly positive.

"I think what has been presented is probably the best outcome we could have asked for," he says.

"The centre is going to benefit the community big time.

"Community desire for our own aquatic facility goes back to the mid-1960s and I would like to acknowledge previous advocacy committees who have fought since then to achieve this outcome."

Council is now working through detailed design of the centre with architects Peddle Thorp and taking the project to tender will be the next major step.

"I'm really looking forward to the day the excavator comes in and starts digging the hole," Colin says.



Will Semple played a part in the revamped bike park.

Jump for joy: Bob Pettitt Bike Park revamp complete

Jan Juc teenager Will Semple describes the revamped Bob Pettitt Bike Park as the "best thing that's happened here for a while".

When the 16-year-old rides the track and tackles the jumps, he does so knowing he played a part in bringing them to life.

The revamped facility was designed and built through an innovative partnership between Council and community members including local riders like Will and his younger brothers Finn and Nick, Surf Coast Mountain Bike Club, Anglesea Bike Park Committee, and local contractor Tim Powell Landscapes.

"We had a brainstorm session and put some rough ideas forward, and they helped with the design," Will said. "The design had to be specific to the size of the track, so you can get speed on the jumps.

"It's been really cool to see it all happen. It's a good feeling to see so many people riding it."

The community-led approach had design and construction criteria to meet safety requirements. The result is a facility that fosters a thriving, healthy, connected community. It can also be utilised by riders of all skill levels - from beginner to experienced.

As well as the community members who took part in the design, the bike park was made possible thanks to volunteers who refined its features and will continue to look after the facility through ongoing minor maintenance.

The Bob Pettitt Bike Park revamp was funded by Council and also the Australian Government, under the Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program.



L-R: Artist Jenna Oldaker with Aunty Mary Shuttleworth, Aunty Joy Oldaker, Aunty Gwen Perkins, Aunty Sheryl Smits and Aunty Mary Zimmer.

First Nations mural makes its mark at Wurdi Baierr Stadium

An International Women's Day mural by First Nations artist Jenna Oldaker is providing a bright welcome for Wurdi Baierr Stadium users in Torquay.

Titled *Wunggurrwil Ba-gurrk Murrup (Strong Woman Spirit)*, the stunning mural was revealed on International Women's Day at an event with more than 100 guests.

"This artwork is a celebration of all the strong women that have travelled this beautiful land that we are lucky enough to call home," Jenna said. "Our Ancestors and Elders travelled these same lands sharing their culture, sharing their stories and ideas, and it is now our responsibility to take care of and nurture our Wadawurrung Country home."

We're moving to a more sustainable future and phasing out printed kerbside bin calendars.

If you want to receive a printed version of the 2023/24 calendar, you will need to opt-in at surfcoast.vic.gov.au/optin or call 5261 0600.

The closing date to opt-in is 5pm, Thursday 31 August 2023.

Other ways to check your bin collection dates:

- Download SCRRApp, the free Surf Coast Rubbish and Recycling App.
- Download a calendar PDF at surfcoast.vic.gov.au/calendars.
- Enter your address at My Neighbourhood at surfcoast.vic.gov.au/mybin.

Confused on bin night?



SCRRApp has you sorted

Available to download FREE from the App Store or Google Play



L-R: Sylvia Maseyk and Cinthya Sabillion with Louise Hall, who has launched Hinterland Art School.

Brush up your skills at Hinterland Art School

A bold dream has become a reality for local artist Louise Hall, who has opened Hinterland Art School with the help of a Council grant.

Louise was a successful recipient in the 2022 DEVELOP program which aims to advance the practice of local creatives and the creative sector.

The new Winchelsea art school has started with figure drawing and painting classes at Globe Theatre and Winchelsea Shire Hall, while printmaking classes will run from Louise's new purpose-built studio from May.

"I saw a gap in Winchelsea and wanted to target people who are keen to learn art skills from drawing and painting, to printmaking," she said. "Most of the people who have started classes are mature aged, and some have said that they've waited all their life to have the time to do something like this. They're so pleased that there is something like this in Winchelsea."

"It's lovely to see the connections they've made already. I've also been approached to run a class for home-schooled youth."

With an arts career spanning 30 years, the visual artist said Hinterland Art School would not have been possible without DEVELOP funding.

"I've been able to afford the printing press and an array of materials," the 2022 Surf Coast Arts Trail participant said. "The studio is totally how I envisioned it. I live in an historic bluestone building, and it's sympathetic to the setting that's in. It's also nice and large, which fits with my philosophy that it needs to be big enough so your ideas can be expansive."

From established professionals to first-timers, artists of all skill levels are welcome at Hinterland Art School (more information via QR code).

The DEVELOP program supports our goal to acknowledge the value of arts and creativity and nurture their growth. To see which projects were successful in this year's round, visit surfcoast.vic.gov.au/ArtistCreativeGrants.

SURF COAST
ARTS Trail
SAT 5 - SUN 6 AUG

surfcoastartmatters.com.au



Members of the Winchelsea Community Planning working group.

Moriac and Winchelsea locals creating their own community plans

Locals know best what makes their township special and what it needs to thrive.

So we're supporting Moriac and Winchelsea locals to develop three-year community plans.

Community plans are created by community members for their community. They contain a shared vision and actions that locals feel motivated to act upon themselves.

The Deans Marsh and district community were the first in the Surf Coast Shire to develop a community plan in 2019, and now its residents are seeing the benefits of the community-initiated projects being realised. This includes the Deans Marsh Community Dinner Program, the PowerMaD renewable energy project, local food initiatives and the establishment of the Deans Marsh Streetscapers who are planning for streetscape improvements.

Working groups have been set up in Moriac and Winchelsea with community surveys and postcards forming part of initial consultation, and other engagement opportunities including focus groups and community dinners planned.

Tony Phelps of the Winchelsea community planning working group said it was about giving everyone in the community the chance to have their say, picking out the common themes, and putting it all together into a master plan for actioning.

"This is an independent pilot project funded by the Surf Coast Shire but they are completely hands-off. The project will see community members design and participate in a community driven process by exploring what matters locally and what people are motivated to act upon," he said.

"The final plan is not a list of wants for Council, or anyone, to fund. It's a plan for locals to make happen whatever is the best way to make happen."

"The end goal is the Community Plan itself, to be available primarily to local people but also going to Council as a guide for future planning."

Find out more and how you can be involved at surfcoast.vic.gov.au/CommunityPlanning.



"There's a whole world over the hill," says Hot Chilli Mama's Sue.

Rural Hinterland Futures Strategy strengthens nature-based tourism

Our stunning hinterland's natural riches offer a unique alternative to the coastal tourism scene.

"The Surf Coast is well known for its beaches, but there's a whole world over the hill that many people don't know about," says Sue (pictured) of Hot Chilli Mama, a boutique chilli business based at the foothills of the Otway Ranges in Deans Marsh.

"There are lots of amazing growers and makers, producing things like wine, walnuts and chillies, many of which form part of the Otway Harvest Trail," she said.

Sue provided feedback during the development of the Rural Hinterland Futures Strategy, which encourages increased agricultural, agri-tourism, and tourism opportunities in the hinterland, while protecting the environmental and landscape values.

The strategy recommendations have now been incorporated into the Surf Coast Planning Scheme to strengthen the role of the hinterland for agriculture and nature-based tourism in designated areas.

The hinterland represents 60% of all land in the Surf Coast Shire, but only three per cent of total visitation. Early signs are promising with a recent report identifying Winchelsea as one of two Surf Coast towns to receive the largest increase in visitor expenditure in the past 12 months. Winchelsea recorded a 50% increase in visitor spending, and Torquay a 51% increase.

"I like that the strategy is about facilitating local business and providing a tourism alternative to the coastline and beaches, but with an important emphasis on protecting the landscape," Sue said.

"The hinterland landscape itself is a golden goose in the Otways, so any development needs to be respectful of the landscape character and qualities of the area."

"It's great that Council has taken the initiative to include the recommendations of the Rural Hinterland Futures Strategy into the planning scheme and I was pleased to be able to be involved in that process."

The Rural Hinterland Futures Strategy aims to increase the hinterland's contribution to the local economy from a baseline of six per cent.

IN BRIEF

Connecting Rosser Blvd to the Surf Coast Highway

Works are about to start to complete the intersection of Rosser Boulevard, Coombes Road and the Surf Coast Highway in north Torquay.

It will include extension of Rosser Boulevard from the Quay2 residential development to connect with the highway, and installation of traffic lights.

This important project will bring safety and traffic flow improvements, creating a new access point to the Surf Coast Highway and easing the traffic load on Merrijig Drive.

Work is expected to take eight months and will also include creation of bike lanes on all approaches to the intersection and indented bus bays on both sides of the highway.

The Surf Coast Highway will remain open with traffic management in place. Access to and from Coombes Road to the highway will be temporarily closed, with detours via Messmate Road.



Pram walk takes off: Kylie with Billy, and Sian with Karda and Maali.

Branching out through hinterland parent activities

A pram walk along the Barwon River followed by a picnic - Sian James is grateful for a new Winchelsea parent group which offers an outing she wasn't able to experience as a first-time mum.

The Winchelsea resident welcomed son Karda during the pandemic, when only virtual catch-ups could take place. A couple of years on, and the arrival of daughter Maali has meant she can participate in activities she missed out on in 2021.

"During COVID, we were in a tiny newborn bubble," she said. "We had Zoom sessions which were good to get to know people, but being able to sit and chat in-person has been so much better and a great way to meet other local mums."

Council's Child and Family Health Team introduced the monthly Winchelsea pram walks this year for parents, caregivers and children of various ages, to help our goal of fostering a thriving, healthy, connected community. In Winchelsea we've also:

- launched a monthly Child and Family Health Open Morning for people to pop in and chat with a nurse,
- supported a fortnightly community-run playgroup, and
- held a free First Aid for Parents and Carers session, with another scheduled for 25 September.

"I've been to an open morning and the playgroup," Sian said. "I love getting out to different things."

Sian and husband Josh moved from Geelong to Winchelsea four years ago, to be closer to family and enjoy the benefits of living in a rural town.

"We've got a big yard for the kids, we've got dogs and chickens, and we just love the small-town feel," Sian said.

Baby boom

We know that hinterland areas and smaller populations can sometimes face challenges to keep social groups going, which is why we're rolling out new Child and Family Health (CFH) initiatives.

We also know there's been a baby boom in the hinterland area, with a 27% increase in total CFH client numbers from July 2021 to Feb 2023.



A greener Great Ocean Road Running Festival

Adventures await on the Surf Coast Events calendar this autumn and beyond, with a range of events playing their part to align with our community vision to "leave the Surf Coast better than we found it".

They include the RACV Solar Great Ocean Road Running Festival, which is committed to developing and improving sustainable initiatives such as:

- Using 100% recyclable race bibs.
- Trialling a reusable product to reduce and minimise the use of cable ties.
- Producing merchandise made from fabric weaved from recycled plastic bottle yarn.
- Managing the event cup waste stream, to limit cross-contamination and increase the amount processed into compost.
- Powering elements of the festival with solar power.
- Promoting Council's Plastic Wise Program, which aims to eliminate single-use plastics at events.
- Encouraging competitors to use refillable hydration and reusable tools that support them, such as vests and belts.

The Festival will be held 20 and 21 May. Events range from 1.5km to an ultra 60km, and two trail runs which will take place in Lorne and Great Otway National Park.

From running, cycling and paddling, to concerts, markets and art exhibitions, there is a wide range of activities on the Surf Coast Events calendar. Stay up-to-date at surfcoastevents.com.au.

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.

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

Did you know?

To drive down our emissions and save on energy bills, we're continuing the roll-out of solar and battery storage on Council buildings.

In the past six months we've installed 188.08 kW solar and 21.2 kWh battery storage on Council facilities. We've also started electrification works to transition away from using gas in our facilities.

Together with local community and school groups, we will soon start planting out an 11-hectare site next to Lake Modewarre in Buckley.

It's part of an environmental planting and carbon offsetting project, which will provide important carbon sequestration, biodiversity and community benefits. The Council-owned land at 185 Walton Road will be used to enhance biodiversity and sequester carbon locally, with the site to be retained and protected for a minimum of 50 years to ensure its success. We're proud to be a carbon neutral accredited organisation with a strong, clear commitment to climate action and environmental leadership.

To empower community-led responses to the climate emergency, \$5,000 climate emergency grants are available.

Expressions of Interest are now open via surfcoast.vic.gov.au/Grants and will close 7 May 2023. Eligible applicants will pitch their project at a community event in June, where the top-voted projects will secure funding.

Surf Coast Energy Group has launched an Ecological Footprint Planner, with support from a Council grant.

The online tool allows Surf Coast residents to check where and how much impact they have on our part of the world, and to take action.

You can complete a 10-minute assessment covering home energy and transportation use, waste production, and food and water consumption. The planner then calculates the sources of greenhouse gas emissions and reports the main challenges before suggesting a number of action pathways to lessen the impact. Try it at sceg.org.au.

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

From our proposed Draft Budget 2023-24 to the Aireys Inlet Affordable Housing Project, find out about community engagement opportunities at surfcoast.vic.gov.au/YourSay.

Local road issue?
Bin not collected?
Playground need maintenance?

Lodge a request

surfcoast.vic.gov.au/request

Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Taking Care of Country

Wadawurrung Traditional Owners are formally Taking Care of Country as part of a new partnership with Council.

In a move tangibly supporting Reconciliation, Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation (WTOAC) is now an approved supplier able to undertake land management services on Country managed by Council.

Work by WTOAC's Gobata Dja (Caring for Country) team will support implementation of the Wadawurrung Traditional Owners' Paleert Tjaara Dja – Healthy Country Plan and Council's own environmental management and protection commitments.

Services will include projects like revegetation and weed management at culturally significant sites such as Djarrak (Bells Beach), and in the future Council will be working with the Gobata Dja team on supplier status for cultural burns and professional advice.

Corrina Eccles, Wadawurrung woman and Cultural Strengthening General Manager, Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation said: "The partnership is a commitment from Council to support Traditional Owner co-management of land and our aspirations in managing our Country through cultural knowledge and traditional ways".

Wadawurrung man and Caring for Country General Manager Greg Robinson said: "This is a milestone for our unit as we progress our ability to protect and enhance Wadawurrung Country through our Natural Resource Management and project management teams.

"We hope that by strengthening the relationship with Surf Coast Shire Council we encourage other land managers on our Country to seek similar relationships."

First Nations Reconciliation is the first theme in our Council Plan. We seek to deepen our understanding and build strong relationships with Traditional Owners, respectful of their culture and supporting their strategic goals.

We also seek to ensure that Council decisions consider and respect Traditional Owner perspectives, culture and knowledge.

Council will mark National Reconciliation Week – 27 May to 3 June – with a community event. Details can be confirmed via surfcoast.vic.gov.au/Reconciliation.

This year's theme is Be a Voice for Generations.



Ray Turner and John Rathjens enjoy a cuppa.

Torquay Men's Shed: So much more than tools and tinkering

There are tools and tinkering in the background, but the 'table of knowledge' takes centre stage, with plenty of lively chat and laughter amid the regular bubbling of the boiling water unit in the background.

It's a typical scene at the Torquay Community Men's Shed, where its 60-plus members meet up twice a week.

"We're virtually a health clinic for older men; a place where everyone can go and meet up. You don't have to participate, you can just sit and have a cuppa and a chat around what we call our table of knowledge," says its Secretary Ian Mathieson.

Members meet up on Tuesday and Wednesday mornings between 8.30am and 12.30pm to chat and tinker away on a range of community projects.

"We've built possum boxes for the local wildlife sanctuary, bird boxes for Friends of Taylor Park, a new noticeboard for Torquay Sailing Club and signs for the Quay and Great Ocean Views community orchards. We also restore furniture and do minor maintenance jobs for those with an urgent need who are able to bring the unit needing fixing into the shed," Ian says.

The men's shed recently received a small equipment grant of \$700 from Council to install a motor on the roller door, making it easier for members to access the woodwork area of the Price Street building, located behind the old Torquay Police Station.

"Some of our members are in their 80s and one is in his 90s so it's made a big difference and it's certainly done a lot for our OH&S," he says.

"We're always looking for new project ideas and new members. Many of our new members have recently moved to Torquay. It's a great way to make connections with others and get involved in something."

Anyone who is interested can pop into the Torquay Men's Shed on Tuesday and Wednesday mornings or find out more at torquaycommunitymensshedinc.com.

SURF COAST SHIRE COUNCIL

Wadawurrung Country

1 Merrijig Drive (PO Box 350) Torquay 3228

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**



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