

Country and Waters

David living his citizenship dream

David with partner Carly and children Venus and Marte.

David Rubin de Celis Leal says he lived a dream formally becoming an Australian citizen.

He was a long way from his home in Mexico's arid heart as he made his ceremonial pledge in Council's Torquay chambers.

"But an official seal from the government to accept me as an Australian. Knowing that you have this place that is yours – that this country is now mine with everyone else. That is a great feeling," he reflected.

"It was very exciting and very meaningful, and a dream come true."

David shifted to Australia from Mexico in 2011 with intention of returning home after a few years of study.

That plan never quite eventuated, and now settled in Deans Marsh with partner Carly Merlo, children Venus, 7, and Marte, 4, and working via his PhD in advanced materials he feels a little blessed.

"It's heaven, the community where we live here is absolutely amazing," he says.

Council hosts at least five citizenship ceremonies each year on behalf of the Australian Department of Home Affairs, and David is one of 112 people from dozens of different countries to have become new citizens in the shire during 2023.

While each person pledges to embrace the ideals and expectations of Australian citizenship, none are expected to renounce anything of their cultural identities, customs or traditions.

David rejoices in sharing his Mexican culture with his Australian community through food, dance, song and stories.

And he rejoices in knowing that his passionate heart has two homes.

Learn more about attaining Australian citizenship by visiting immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/ or phoning the information line on **13 18 80**.

Aquatic centre progress

Detailed planning for the \$46 million Surf Coast Aquatic and Health Centre is progressing, with construction tenders set to open by the end of 2023.

The centre will bring health and wellbeing benefits for community members and visitors, with a 25-metre indoor pool, program pool, gym and allied health suites.

Design has focused on accessibility and balancing environmental sustainability with positive user experience and aesthetics.

The construction tender is expected to be awarded by mid 2024, aiming for completion of the centre in mid 2026.

See the latest designs and updates via surfcoast.vic.gov.au/pool.





Dear Lola performs at Re-Grouse the Dolls House.

Lorne students hit the right note with local concert

A small group can make a big difference, just ask Thomas Wallis.

Thomas is one of four Lorne P-12 College students who successfully staged a fundraising concert that will have lasting benefits for the school.

Re-Grouse the Dolls House welcomed five youth bands, enjoyed by about 150 people at the Stribling Reserve main pavilion in September.

“We wanted it to be a good community event and to see people enjoying themselves,” Thomas said. “There aren’t many gigs in Lorne, so we wanted the emphasis on the music. It was a solid turnout and shows that if you really want something and you have a plan, you can achieve it.”

The event was held in partnership with Council’s Youth team. As well as taking on a lead role coordinating the concert, Thomas played guitar in two bands on the night.

“The event was a fundraiser for the school’s Dolls House, which is a space for bands to rehearse and for instrumental lessons,” he said. “We seem to have raised enough money to renovate the space and put in some new windows, carpet and equipment, which is great.”

Thomas thanked the local Lorne businesses which donated raffle prizes

Re-Grouse the Dolls House was supported by FReeZA - a Victorian Government initiative to deliver safe, youth-friendly events.

 @SurfCoastYouth

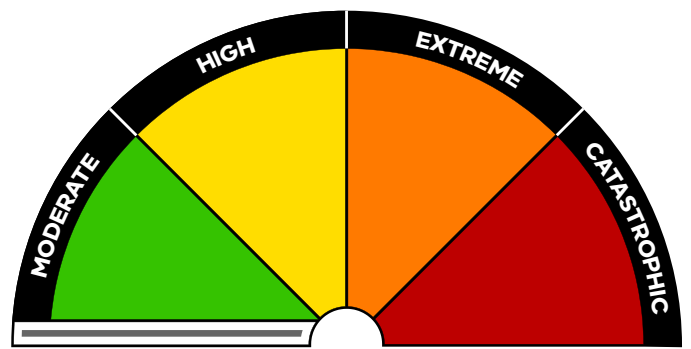
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OFFICE HOURS: 8.30am to 5pm, Monday to Friday

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



Bushfire preparedness: Play your role

As we head into a predicted hotter and dryer weather pattern, it is critical to understand and manage our bushfire risk in the Surf Coast Shire. Many of us live in and around the Otways. While we appreciate this natural environment, we need to be aware it poses a risk during bushfire season.

Bushfire modelling demonstrates that planned burning by fire agencies can reduce the risk to lives and properties by 30 to 40% in the Otways. The capacity to complete these planned burns and reduce the risk is heavily determined by the weather leading up to summer. Some years, less burning is possible so the remaining risk is higher.

The majority of the risk across the Otways is on private land in and around our townships. Action taken on private property can greatly reduce the risk to lives and properties.

How to prepare for increasing bushfire weather conditions

- Before and during every bushfire season, clean up your property, focusing on:
 - removing fine fuels (leaves, twigs, keeping grass short).
 - reducing shrubs, trees and other flammable objects around your house/sheds etc.
 - vulnerable points such as windows, decking, under house storage etc.

Learn more via cfa.vic.gov.au/plan-prepare/how-to-prepare-your-property.

- Embers are responsible for 90% of houses lost in bushfires. By managing vegetation and reducing fuels you can reduce the risk of house loss due to embers. Vegetation management is most important in the lead up to and during summer.

Learn more via surfcoast.vic.gov.au/FireReady.

- By utilising your green waste bin, you can dispose of over 12 cubic meters of green waste per year. Council has provided three free green waste disposal vouchers with the October rates notice for every property. These vouchers are valid in November and December to help clean up your garden of bushfire fuels.

Whether you are living, working or visiting the Surf Coast Shire, it is essential to understand, plan and prepare for bushfire. The Australian Fire Danger Rating System provides triggers for actions. Plan ahead for the bushfire season at cfa.vic.gov.au/warnings-restrictions.



Sowing seeds for the future

Students joined Torquay Landcare to plant at our biodiverse carbon offset site in Buckley.

Community groups are teaming up with Council to make ground on climate action and enhance biodiversity. Numerous local groups participated in plantings on Council-owned or managed land in winter, including:

- Friends of Allen Noble Sanctuary planting 50 seedlings.
- Winchelsea Land and River Care continuing planting along the Barwon River at Winchelsea, with 1000 seedlings from Council and others from Geelong Community Nursery.
- Jan Juc Coast Action planting 300 rushes and sedges along a section of Jan Juc Creek.
- Torquay Coast Action planting around 300 grasstrees and common flat peas at Grass Tree Park.
- Surfers Appreciating Natural Environment planting 50 seedlings at Djarrak (Bells Beach) with Australian Indigenous Surfing Titles participants.
- Torquay Landcare and RACV Torquay staff planting 400 seedlings on Jan Juc Creek.
- Wadawurrung Gobata Dja (Taking Care of Country team) planting 300 groundcovers and shrubs as part of cultural heritage protection works at Djarrak (Bells Beach).
- Torquay Landcare, Moriac Primary School, Bellbrae Primary School and Surf Coast Secondary College helping plant 1000 trees and shrubs at Council's biodiverse carbon offset site at Buckley. Rotary Club of Torquay provided lunch for the students.
- Council staff and councillors planting 500 seedlings at our Buckley biodiverse carbon offset site, while we have also completed planting at various Council reserves.

The plantings are part of our ongoing work to improve the condition of Council-managed reserves. The plants help to stabilise creek banks, provide food and shelter for wildlife, improve the quality and diversity of habitat, store carbon, and beautify the areas.

YOUR BIN COLLECTION DAY WILL CHANGE THE WEEK OF CHRISTMAS

Our collection truck drivers will have the day off on Christmas Day (Monday 25 December). This means all residential bins will be emptied on the day following your usual collection day. So, during the week of Christmas only, bins normally collected on Monday will be emptied on Tuesday, bins normally emptied on Tuesday will be emptied on Wednesday etc.

Collections will return to the normal schedule from Monday 1 January.

All residential properties that receive a kerbside service will also receive an extra landfill and an extra recycling bin collection during the festive season.

To check how the changes affect you, and to see when your extra collections will be:

- Download SCRRApp at surfcoast.vic.gov.au/SCRRApp.
- Download and print a PDF calendar at surfcoast.vic.gov.au/calendars.
- Visit surfcoast.vic.gov.au/mybin and enter your address.



George climbing in his outdoor enclosure.

24-hour cat curfew starts across the shire

George the Burmese cat enjoys some fun in the sun. So his owners have built an enclosure that allows him to soak up some rays safely — not only for him but also for native wildlife.

Aireys Inlet residents Jessica and Peter created the outdoor netted enclosure, which also helps George comply with Council's 24-hour cat curfew. The new curfew requires all cats within the municipality to be confined at all times to the owner's premises unless the cat is appropriately restrained.

"George is mainly an indoor cat but he loves to be outside in the sun as well," Jessica said.

"Fortunately we had an existing tree that we could incorporate into the enclosure design. He can use the tree as a scratching post, and lazing bed. We purchased the cat netting and zippered door through eBay."

The 24-hour cat curfew — which started 30 September — has been introduced to help prevent harm to wildlife, and to improve the health and safety of cats.

"The cat curfew isn't an issue for us as George has always been contained," Jessica said. "We love the local wildlife, especially the birds, and we want to protect them."

Did you know? According to Animal Welfare Victoria, cats that are confined to your property live three times longer than those that are allowed to roam.

Pilk Purriyn truth-telling

Wadawurrung Traditional Owners will again welcome the Surf Coast community to Country in Torquay on 26 January for reflection at Pilk Purriyn – sunrise – and deep listening to historic truth-telling.

An inaugural Pilk Purriyn event earlier this year drew a crowd of 2000 people.

Council is supporting the Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation to stage the event again in 2024, against the backdrop of the timeless waves of Warri Dja (Sea Country) at Cosy Corner beach.

Alongside traditional Welcome to Country, Smoking and dancing ceremonies, Wadawurrung Traditional Owners will share truths, seeking to deepen understanding of the traumas and hurt that colonisation brought upon the First Peoples of this land.

“As Wadawurrung People, we were deeply touched to see the overwhelming number of attendees at the first Pilk Purriyn event, which showed us the deep support and recognition the Surf Coast community has for understanding Wadawurrung Country and People,” said Wadawurrung Traditional Owner Corrina Eccles.

“It shows the community is ready to koling wada-ngal (let us walk together).”

First Nations Reconciliation is the first theme in the Council Plan. In 2021 Council resolved to not formally take part in Australia Day celebrations and to fly the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags at half-mast on 26 January.

The resolution did not seek to diminish community celebrations of 26 January, but to acknowledge historic truths, and the difficulty of the day for First Nations people.

Pilk Purriyn 2024 will start at 5.30am. Bookings will not be essential but registrations will be encouraged to gauge numbers and enable sharing of updates.

People will be able to find a registration link, event details and FAQs at surfcoast.vic.gov.au/Pilk-Purriyn.

More recreation space at Winchelsea Common

Community members and visitors will soon be enjoying more recreation space at the much-loved Winchelsea Common.

Planning for reopening of the reserve's former go-kart area is progressing following Council endorsement of project scope including addition of a loop path, seating and interpretive signs.

The new path will link to Gladman Street via a new drainage crossover, which will help alleviate localised flooding.

Work is scheduled for completion by the end of 2023, continuing revitalisation of parts of the Common following its decade-long closure due to contamination from former gun club activities.

The former go-kart area contains contaminated soil from throughout the Common but is safely capped with non-contaminated soil.

An Environmental Management Plan prohibits excavation or movement of soil within the area, meaning plans for construction of a bike park have been unable to proceed.



In the New Year Council will discuss with Winchelsea community the potential for establishing a bike park elsewhere.

The reserve was reopened for restricted public access in March 2022 following extensive clean-up work by the then Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, and Council.

For latest updates on this and other Winchelsea projects visit surfcoast.vic.gov.au/WinchProjects.

Surf Coast Shire Council Acknowledges the Wadawurrung People, and Gulidjan and Gadubanud Peoples of the Eastern Maar, their Elders and leaders past, present and emerging as the Traditional Owners of the skies, land, waters and sea country across our municipality.

We also extend our respect to all First Nations people who are part of the community.

Carols



**Aireys Inlet • Anglesea
Winchelsea • Deans Marsh
Lorne • Torquay**

For details on Carols happening near you head to surfcoastevents.com.au

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Markets



Winchelsea Community Market
FIRST SUN OF EVERY MONTH
• 9AM – 1PM

Torquay Farmers Market
EVERY SAT • 8:30AM – 1PM

Torquay Cowrie Market
19 NOV, 17 DEC, 21 JAN, 18 FEB
• 10AM – 3PM

Aireys Inlet Market
4 NOV, 26 NOV, 10 DEC, 31 DEC, 7 JAN,
14 JAN, 21 JAN, 28 JAN, 11 FEB
• 9AM – 1PM

Anglesea Riverbank Market
5 NOV, 1 JAN, 7 JAN, 14 JAN, 10 MAR,
31 MAR • 9AM – 4PM

Anglesea Twilight Farmers Market
3 NOV, 17 NOV, 1 DEC, 15 DEC, 27 DEC,
5 JAN, 19 JAN, 2 FEB, 16 FEB
• 4:30PM – 8PM

Lorne Market
4 NOV • 9AM – 4PM

**SURF
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