

# Country and Waters

## Tiny Houses on Wheels Pilot

Applications have started rolling in for Council's Tiny Houses on Wheels Pilot. The pilot aims to test what role tiny houses on wheels can play in providing a more affordable housing option.

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Image: Christopher Wong

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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 lands we now call Surf Coast Shire.

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



An aerial shot of the car park at Rip Curl Pro

## Unwavering support: Rip Curl Pro benefits local club

**A major international event has invaluable benefits for a local sports club.**

The Jan Juc Cricket Club Sharks have taken on the car park management role for the Rip Curl Pro Bells Beach since 2008. More than 60 club members lend a helping hand, raising vital funds for the Sharks.

"We set-up the parking areas and install barriers with support from the team at disability services organisation genU," Jan Juc Cricket Club life member Phillip Smith said.

"We then direct incoming traffic into the appropriate parking areas and manage vehicle and pedestrian movement to and from the parking area."

The role has enabled the club to raise more than \$10,000 in recent years.

"These funds have been critical in the expansion of our junior cricket program and the recent establishment of our women's and girls' cricket. We were also able to reduce our membership fees during the COVID-19 period, which ensured people were still able to participate."

Phillip was full of praise for the Rip Curl Pro, describing it as "iconic".

"The event attracts thousands of people from all around Australia and many international visitors, and is great for local businesses," he said.

"The Bells contest is of particular interest to the club as we have had a number of players surfing in recent Rip Curl Pro events, including Xavier Huxtable who reached the final 16 last year."

### 2024 Rip Curl Pro

- The 61st running of the Rip Curl Pro Bells Beach will be held 26 March to 5 April.
- It is the most significant event on Council's events calendar, delivering an estimated \$8 million economic benefit for our region.
- The event helps cement Torquay's status as Australia's surfing capital, and Bells Beach as the spiritual home of surfing in Australia.
- It usually attracts 35,000 to 40,000 attendees each year.
- The Council-run 2024 Rising Star Awards are held in the lead-up, to recognise the top local young surfers.

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# Tiny Houses on Wheels Pilot starts in the Surf Coast Shire



Applications are open for the Tiny Houses on Wheels Pilot

Image: Christopher Wong

## Council's Tiny Houses on Wheels Pilot is building another affordable housing option so more people can live in the Surf Coast Shire, according to Deans Marsh resident Adam Hickman.

Applications are open for our three-year Tiny Houses on Wheels (THOWs) Pilot as we continue to seek solutions to the affordable housing and key worker accommodation crisis.



Adam (pictured left) previously lived in a tiny house on wheels short-term before his young family built a low-waste, low-impact straw bale house in Deans Marsh.

"Affordability and flexibility were two main benefits for us," he said of his tiny house on wheels experience. "It also allowed us to minimise what we needed to live, and we were fully off-grid."

Living sustainably is a passion for Adam, who has carved a career from it as founder of Surf Coast-based Evergreen Homes Australia which builds tiny homes.

"The Tiny Houses on Wheels Pilot is bringing another option into the current market," he said. "It's going to mean that more people can afford to live here, including those who grew up here but haven't been able to stay because of the housing crisis. It'll also help tourism and hospitality workers."

The pilot will enable us to assess the impacts of tiny houses on wheels and monitor and evaluate the contribution they could make as a safe and legal way to provide affordable and diverse housing options.

THOWs will be required to be on a wheeled trailer base and placed on privately-owned land, subject to an agreement between the applicant and land owner.

Assessment criteria include legal compliance, environmental impacts, amenity, access, waste management, connection to services and utilities, and safety. The tiny house must not be located in a Flooding Overlay or Bushfire Management Overlay, unless within a township boundary

If successful, applicants will be granted a Temporary Residence Permit under our Community Amenity Local Law 2021.

We will consult directly with participants and neighbouring properties during the pilot, to help develop processes and policies to potentially regulate THOWs in the future.

The pilot focuses entirely on possibilities for affordable housing and key worker accommodation, and does not permit the tiny houses on wheels for short-term leisure-style accommodation.

The pilot was launched two days before the Victorian Government made it easier for people to build a small second home. A permanent small second home up to 60 square metres - also known as a granny flat or secondary dwelling - no longer requires a planning permit in most cases where there are no flooding, bushfire, environmental or other special planning controls. It still requires a building permit.

Both our pilot and the state government changes are providing people with further options for affordable housing in the Surf Coast Shire.

For more information about the Tiny Houses on Wheels Pilot — including the application checklist, process and frequently asked questions — visit [surfcoast.vic.gov.au/THOWs](https://surfcoast.vic.gov.au/THOWs).

## GRANTS

Our grants program empowers individuals, groups and communities. Upcoming grant rounds include:

- **DEVELOP Artists and Creatives Grants** — applications close 29 February.
- **Event Grants** (Tourism, Boutique Creative/Special Focus) — applications close 29 February.
- **Community Initiative Grants** — applications open 1 March.
- **Natural Environment Grants** — applications open 1 March.
- **Event Grants** (Community Events) — applications open 1 April.

Learn more: [surfcoast.vic.gov.au/grants](https://surfcoast.vic.gov.au/grants).



# Kick-start 2024 with sustainable living actions for your household

A new year is the perfect time to make some positive changes at home. Sustainable living is about treading more gently on the earth, using only what you really need and protecting the environment.

From simple and free through to complex and costly, there are options to suit all circumstances. Challenge your household to take on some actions:

- **Adopt a green mindset** – reconnect with nature and understand that we are all part of the same ecosystem and share this beautiful world. Connect to environment groups near you, which you can find via [surfcoast.vic.gov.au/CommunityDirectory](https://surfcoast.vic.gov.au/CommunityDirectory).
- **Rethink ownership** – consider borrowing, loaning, hiring, leasing or sharing instead. Do you really need to own everything? Why not join a toy library or tool library?

- **Practice mindful consumption** – think local, seasonal, fairtrade, organic, high quality, reusable, repairable, second-hand options, and items made from recycled materials.
- **Avoid food waste** – plan your meals weekly, check your pantry/freezer/fridge first, then write a shopping list, and stick to it. Store food correctly and keep short-life items in a 'use me first' central fridge shelf. For unavoidable food waste, compost right in your green lid FOGO bin, or set-up your own home compost bin or worm farm.



- **Visit Repair Café Surf Coast** – where you can take broken or damaged items and get them repaired by volunteer experts for free. Repair Café is held

monthly at Aireys Inlet Community Hall. [@RepairCafeSurfCoast](https://www.instagram.com/RepairCafeSurfCoast).

- **Recycle right in your yellow lid recycling bin** – no soft plastics or plastic bags, keep items loose, and no food. To ensure you are recycling correctly, download SCRRApp via [surfcoast.vic.gov.au/SCRRApp](https://surfcoast.vic.gov.au/SCRRApp).
- **Work out your ecological footprint** – see where you can take climate action and reduce your emissions. Try this locally-created calculator by Surf Coast Energy Group: [sceg.org.au/calculator/story.html](https://sceg.org.au/calculator/story.html).
- **Reduce your energy use, electrify your house and switch to renewables** – check out the local Energy Tips website to increase your comfort, reduce your bills and help the climate: [energytips.org.au](https://energytips.org.au).
- **Plant indigenous plants in your garden** – help provide wildlife habitat. Mulch your garden to reduce evaporation and reduce weeds. Avoid the use of dangerous chemicals and poisons to help protect our wildlife.
- **Learn more about the natural environment** – record and share your observations with the free iNaturalist app ([inaturalist.org](https://inaturalist.org)). Join the online community who can help identify what you've seen.

## Re-imagining the vital Anglesea hub

**Council is working with the community to re-imagine the Anglesea Community and Health Hub and how it can be designed to better meet the needs of the community.**

The McMillan Street precinct is important for the Anglesea community. It's a place where community connections are made and strengthened — from kinder youngsters to senior citizens; The Sound Doctor showcasing a range of musicians; the active community house; community gardeners and Angair's conservation efforts; and talented artists, historians and passionate locals representing various community groups. There is a diverse range of hub users, including people who utilise the various community health services and GP clinic.

Several buildings in the precinct are nearing the end of their structural life and there is some duplication of services and programs.

Council secured \$200,000 of Victorian Government funding for a major integrated planning project, supported by a Council contribution of \$50,000.

A draft precinct plan was endorsed for community consultation, and we have received more than 150 submissions and survey responses, as well as feedback from an Open Day in November 2023.

The draft precinct plan isn't a final design, it is a concept to help people visualise the site during consultation.

Further engagement to explore design options is anticipated in March/April 2024. We propose to do this through a co-design process with interested community stakeholders.

Many businesses in Anglesea are unable to attract and retain workers due to a lack of affordable rental accommodation. As a result, residents are no longer able to afford to live in Anglesea including key workers such as teachers, doctors, nurses and permanent hospitality workers. This places pressures on businesses, services, schools and community clubs, and impacts services available for residents and visitors. The McMillan Street site provides an opportunity to provide affordable rental housing for these workers.

To stay up-to-date with the Anglesea hub project, including consultation opportunities and FAQs, visit [surfcoast.vic.gov.au/AngleseaHub](https://surfcoast.vic.gov.au/AngleseaHub).



# Powerful owl secrets being revealed

**Australia's largest owl species calls the Surf Coast Shire home, and Council is helping uncover its secretive habits.**

The Powerful Owl is a threatened species in Victoria and difficult to detect, monitor and research.

But a project led by Deakin University PhD student Nick Carter, supported by Council, has GPS-tracked specimens in the Great Otway National Park uncovering some of their secretive nocturnal adventures.

GPS monitors collect invaluable data on Powerful Owl movement and behaviour, with the aim of identifying more effective and targeted ways to conserve the species.

Powerful Owls are large birds and grow to up to 65cm long, with wingspans of more than one metre.

They need forest habitat to live, relying on large hollow-bearing trees to breed and raise chicks, and they mate for life which can be up to 30 years.

The birds fly silently in the bush to hunt prey like possums and gliders.

Loss of habitat and secondary poisoning from rodenticides has significantly impacted their population.

Not using rodent bait around the home is the best way to prevent secondary poisoning but if it can't be avoided look for 'multi feed kill' or 'first generation anticoagulant rodenticide'. Poison labelled 'single feed kill' should be avoided.

Researcher Nick suggests that if people would like owls at their property, particularly to help reduce possum numbers, they should support revegetation projects, protect native habitat and stop using deadly rodenticides that cause problems for a



Picture: Nick Carter, Deakin University

range of wildlife.

He encourages people to use citizen science apps to report any Powerful Owl sightings across Surf Coast Shire, or to email him at [nbca@deakin.edu.au](mailto:nbca@deakin.edu.au) particularly if any roosting sites or breeding hollows are identified.

People can follow his work via

 [du\\_powls](https://www.instagram.com/du_powls)

## Great Ocean Road Ridgeline Trail

**Bellbrae Primary School parent Shauna Burford is one of three community champions behind the Ridgeline Trail Community Vision.**

The 3.7km trail is parallel and to the north of the Great Ocean Road between Bellbrae and Torquay and is often frequented by children and their families riding to and from school.

"We've been working on this for about three years. It started after COVID when people were looking for ways to help people reconnect," Shauna said.

"We noticed a lot of kids and their families riding along the trail. We went out to the community and schools and asked what they feel would encourage them to keep riding.

"For the parents it was about safety, and for the kids it was about fun, so the Ridgeline Trail Community Vision captures all those elements."

It is a holistic vision, integrating active travel, recreation, and enjoying the environment through seating, interpretation signage, artwork, and playful off-pathway elements.

"It recognises nature is one of the Surf Coast Shire's most valuable assets. The

vision is linked to a variety of community groups including Bellbrae Primary School, Surf Coast Energy Group and Torquay Landcare," Shauna said.

"The project was proposed to Council in June 2022, and Council's Community Project Development Program then assisted us to capture our vision."

The works include improving pathway quality and drainage, reducing weeds and rubbish impacting biodiversity and trail experience, improved road and pedestrian safety and pathway connections.

"We have a bit of work to do to transform it into a scenic community trail connecting us to nature and the places we want to go," Shauna said.

Council is currently leading two pathway projects, funded via developer contributions, within the area covered by the Ridgeline Trail Community Vision.

This includes upgrading the existing 2.6km service road to a regional shared pathway from Christian College to



Bellbrae Reserve as part of the Great Ocean Road Regional Pathway project. It also includes the design of a new section of the Great Ocean Road Regional Pathway (Christian College to Duffields Road) involving the remaining 1.1km trail section.

**Do you have a project idea to make your community an even better place to live? Visit [surfcoast.vic.gov.au/ProjectProposals](https://surfcoast.vic.gov.au/ProjectProposals).**

# Splash park to feature in Winchelsea pool revamp



Design image of the Winchelsea Pool redevelopment

**Redevelopment of the popular Winchelsea Pool is progressing, with addition of a children's splash park to be among new features.**

Work is underway on the Barwon Terrace site and detailed design almost complete.

The redevelopment will include:

- Demolition of existing pools, pump house, amenity and shade structures and concrete concourses.
- Renewal of 25-metre and leisure pools.

- Renewal of concourses, pool surrounds and drainage systems.
- Construction of a zero-depth splash park, with elements decided by public consultation.
- Construction of plant room and amenities building.

The size of the pool site will remain the same but the amenities building will be relocated to the south-east of the site to create a more central entry point and better connection with the adjoining Adventure Play Space.

Construction is scheduled for completion during the 2024-25 summer.

The existing pool reached the end of its serviceable life after having provided summer fun for families and visitors since 1963.

The redevelopment is one of several projects progressing in Winchelsea's Barwon Terrace precinct, including upgrading of the Adventure Play Space, extension of the Barwon River loop walk and building of a new gathering space shelter.

For updates visit [surfcoast.vic.gov.au/WinchProjects](https://surfcoast.vic.gov.au/WinchProjects).

## 1st Modewarre Scouts secure aquatics grant

**The 1st Modewarre Scout Group took to the water recently, using new snorkelling equipment purchased with a \$2,050 grant from Council.**

Our revamped Community Grants Program saw just over \$97,000 in funding go to various community groups during the August/September round.

Modewarre group leader and Scout for over 32 years Marie McPadden said they bought 35 new snorkel sets with the funding, and hit the pool in November.

"The current badge work program has a section on aquatics, one of the activities the kids need to do is snorkelling," Marie said.

"Then they can follow a stream through to scuba if they want. Before, we didn't have the equipment so we couldn't even complete the basic level.

"Now we can cater to all age groups, from Joeys up to Scouts, and provide a pathway through our Scout Aquatic Outdoor Adventure Training Program."

Marie said for community groups, grants make a big difference when it comes to the experiences they can provide.

**"Without the grant I don't think we could do it. With COVID we can't share equipment, and we couldn't afford enough equipment to be able to take 15 kids at a time," she said.**



"This experience opens the kids' horizons. Snorkelling is a bit of an unknown for them, it's a challenge but they rise to it. It's part of what we do as Scouts."

The grant is part of Council's plan for a healthy connected community, helping facilitate opportunities within organisations like the 1st Modewarre Scouts.



# AIDA project remembers Ash Wednesday experience



Picture: Keith Cecil Collection

“There were friends of mine down at Lorne and I said to them look if you get in trouble please come here. There’s a bed here for you for the night.

“Little did I know that I’d be the one that would be standing out at night with no bed and no house while we watched it, from the hall, burn.

“They are things that I try to forget, but I don’t.” – Fiona Ethell

Fiona Ethell and her family dodged flames and falling power poles to take shelter in Aireys Inlet Hall as Ash Wednesday’s bushfire inferno descended on the town in 1983.

They had escaped their home with minutes to spare and from their refuge at the hall witnessed extraordinary scenes as their town was consumed by firestorm.

Forty years on the experiences of Fiona Ethell, son Bob and other Aireys Inlet community members have become part of a powerful oral history.

A new Ash Wednesday Remembered digital archive created by Aireys Inlet and District Association, AIDA, shares raw, heartfelt and inspiring testimonies of devastation and recovery from 30 people including frontline firefighters, long-time and seasonal residents and community volunteers.

Ash Wednesday’s inferno razed Traditional Countries of the Gadabanud

People and Wadawurrung People as it raced from Deans Marsh to Lorne and then raged along the Surf Coast to Anglesea, torching 41,000 hectares, claiming three lives and 729 homes, including 219 in Aireys Inlet, 177 in Fairhaven, 87 in Moggs Creek and 32 at Eastern View.

Though Aireys Inlet was among hardest hit communities its stories had never been formally archived.

AIDA mobilised its Ash Wednesday Remembered project with support funding from Council’s Community Initiatives grants program, commissioning local documentary maker Alexander Watkins to conduct and document interviews.

He says he feels humbled to have been trusted by survivors like Fiona Ethell with stories of ‘hardship and humanity’, and hopes the archive will grow as a testimony to community strength, helping to deepen understanding of disasters and fire preparedness.

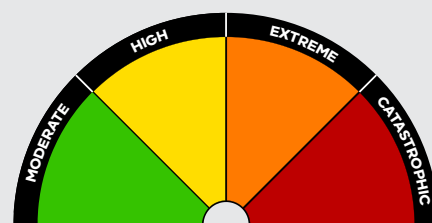
AIDA committee member and project co-ordinator Peter McPhee says the archive ‘rectifies a silence’ in recording Aireys Inlet’s Ash Wednesday experience.

“The Ash Wednesday bushfire 40 years ago was the most significant event of the past century in our district. We are gratified that such a superb collection of recollections and images has been created to mark the losses, sadness and bravery of that time,” he says.

Visit the digital archive:  
[ashwednesdayremembered.com.au](http://ashwednesdayremembered.com.au).

## New Fire Danger Rating System

Summer is here, so is bushfire season



### KNOW YOUR TRIGGERS FOR ACTION

**MODERATE**

Plan and prepare

**HIGH**

Be ready to act

**EXTREME**

Take action now to protect life and property

**CATASTROPHIC**

For your survival, leave bushfire risk areas

# Multilingual messages target cockie feeding

A multilingual 'Don't feed the cockatoos' campaign is underway in Lorne.

Stickers on street bins and at outdoor eating areas, along with flyers, share the message in simplified Chinese, Punjabi, Hindi and English, helping to educate the town's many seasonal visitors.

Signs emphasise that cockies are wild birds and that feeding them can make them reliant on people for food and help spread diseases.

They also help amplify the message that responsibility rests with visitors, residents and business owners alike to avoid feeding the birds.

The summer campaign accompanies rollout of 'Operation Lockatoo' – fitting of lid mechanisms on residential bins to help prevent the birds from foraging and spreading litter.

The six-month mechanism-fitting program will run until April and follows trials of nine bin modifications and lid mechanisms during the past two years.

The mechanisms are being fitted street by street. People can check when locks will be fitted in their neighbourhoods via [surfcoast.vic.gov.au/binlock](http://surfcoast.vic.gov.au/binlock) or by downloading the Surf Coast Rubbish and Recycling App at [surfcoast.vic.gov.au/SCRRApp](http://surfcoast.vic.gov.au/SCRRApp) to receive notifications.

People can help prevent cockatoos from bin foraging by engaging lid mechanisms if fitted, avoiding over-filling bins and not leaving out seed or other feed which attracts the wild birds into the town.



## Markets

### Winchelsea Community Market

First Sunday of every month  
(9AM – 1PM)

### Torquay Farmers Market

Every Saturday  
(8:30AM – 1PM)

### Torquay Cowrie Market

21 Jan, 18 Feb, 17 Mar  
(10AM – 3PM)

### Aireys Inlet Market

21 Jan, 28 Jan, 11 Feb,  
10 Mar, 31 Mar (9AM – 1PM)

### Anglesea Riverbank Market

10 Mar, 31 Mar  
(9AM – 4PM)

### Anglesea Twilight Farmers Market

26 Jan, 2 Feb, 16 Feb, 1 Mar, 15 Mar  
(4:30PM – 8PM)

### Deans Marsh Market

18 Feb (10AM – 2PM)  
17 Mar (10AM – 4PM)

### Lorne Market

27 Jan, 30 Mar (9AM – 4PM)

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COAST  
EVENTS**

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