

Country and Waters

Lorne to welcome Great Ocean Road Women's Surf Festival

Surf Coast Women's Boardriders founder Shaakira Ariffin

When Shaakira Ariffin's mum bought her a surfboard for Christmas more than 15 years ago, she didn't realise it would be the gift that keeps on giving.

The present sparked a passion for surfing that led to Shaakira founding Surf Coast Women's Boardriders.

Shaakira is excited to work with Surfing Victoria to help deliver the first edition of The Great Ocean Road Women's Surf Festival in Lorne, in partnership with Surf Coast Shire Council. The festival, to be held 7 and 8 December, is thanks to a Play Well Participation Grant from the Australian Sports Commission.

"We have a great surfing culture here on the Surf Coast," Shaakira said. "With our region being at the forefront of the surfing industry, it makes perfect sense to encourage women and girls to give surfing a go."

The all-inclusive women's festival will feature learn-to-surf lessons, sunrise yoga, a team event, individual longboard competition, podcast recordings, movie screenings and guest speakers.

Shaakira said the event will provide a great opportunity for females to catch their first wave.

"Surfing is all about growth," she said. "It's so rewarding, physically and mentally. Most importantly, it's about having fun."

Shaakira welcomes newcomers to Surf Coast Women's Boardriders.

"I started the club after I moved to Torquay because I wanted to connect with women who surf, and to be involved in the community," she said.

"It's a place where women can come together socially and share their love for the ocean. We also have events, coaching, competition and ocean awareness initiatives."

Stay up-to-date with Surf Coast Events, including the surf festival:

@SurfCoastEvents

Winchelsea Pool to make a splash

Winchelsea's new pool is on schedule to make a splash next summer, with redevelopment of the much-loved community asset well underway.

New 25-metre and leisure pools have taken shape on the Barwon Terrace site and construction is continuing.

A summer opening date is still to be determined.

The redevelopment includes addition of a zero-depth splash park which will provide plenty of fun for youngsters, and building of a pavilion and entry point at the south-east end of the site providing better connection with adjoining recreation spaces and facilities.

The former pool was decommissioned in March having reached the end of its serviceable life after 60 years, and responses from almost 300 people have shaped redevelopment designs.



Contractors salvaged almost 96 per cent of materials from demolition of the previous pools, surroundings and buildings – totalling more than 817 tonnes – for recycled use off-site.

Improve your eco footprint



Surf Coast Energy Group (SCEG) has launched an updated online Surf Coast Eco Footprint Planner - an important tool to help you tackle climate action. The update to the planner was made possible through a Council Community Initiative grant.

First released in late 2022, the planner highlights the sources of greenhouse gas emissions in daily life including the amount of energy you use, how you travel and what you eat. You're then provided with your total amount of emissions you emit each year and pathways for actions to reduce them.

The updated planner includes biodiversity, carbon capture, water use and circular economy actions, as well as recognising the impact of volunteering or financially contributing to local sustainability initiatives.

Residents looking to retrofit their home to improve their eco footprint can use the planner to identify areas for improvement. The planner also provides links and information on local providers who can help.

SCEG President Graeme Stockton said while we have significant global problems, the best way for us to address them is through local action. One of SCEG's icon initiatives is to build a biolink – which features landscape connections – from Torquay and the Spring Creek valley to the eastern Otways. “The Eco Footprint Planner encourages Surf Coast residents to think about these types of projects to improve local biodiversity, to capture more carbon, to provide more recreation opportunities and to help landowners with new economic opportunities,” Graeme said.

The Eco Footprint Planner only takes 10 minutes to complete with suggestions at the end to show how you can reduce your eco footprint. Try the planner at sceg.org.au.

Taking action: Grant to trial new weed removal method

Torquay Coast Action is trialing a new mechanical method for removing weeds in Grasstree Park, made possible through a Council Natural Environment grant.

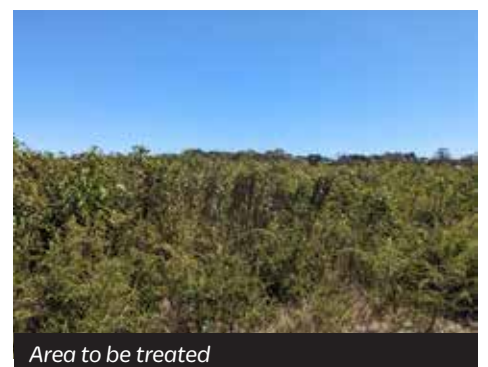
Grasstree Park Nature Reserve is a spectacular grasstree and wildflower reserve on the corner of Surf Coast Highway and Messmate Road. After an ecological burn in the park, native wattle has regrown and is dominating parts of the reserve, killing off any potential regrowth of naturally occurring heathland species. Removing the wattle will provide opportunities for indigenous species to grow, resulting in a significant boost to biodiversity of this part of the park.

Torquay Coast Action has been active in the local area for more than 28 years, tackling invasive woody weeds from Point Impossible to Point Danger and improving coastal environments and restoring habit for native wildlife.

Traditionally the dense thickets of wattle are removed by hand – an arduous and expensive task.

Whilst researching weed control methods, Torquay Coast Action found the Eco Blade. This mechanical removal of the wattle allows for a larger area to be treated than is possible by hand removal. The Eco Blade cuts the wattle to a height of 300mm and treats the cut plant with herbicide minimising damage to any existing indigenous plants. Outcomes of this trial will be shared with other groups facing similar threats from monocultures after fire or disturbance in local ecosystems.

Congratulations to Torquay Coast Action for being prepared to trial novel techniques in the battle to protect biodiversity in Grasstree Park.



Area to be treated



What it will look like after the treatment

Sharing passion for print on the Surf Coast Arts Trail

Deans Marsh artist Gillian Farrow says there is something wonderful about how a print paste takes to fabric.



Gillian Farrow in her studio 'Shed 290'. Image: Bobby Dazzler Photography

"It can have a beautiful luminosity, especially on natural fibre such as linen," Gillian says.

"Textiles, it's fair to say, are my first love and I work as a printmaker on textiles, using screen printing, stencilling, stamping and any mark-making I can print with.

"With print-making there are always things to experiment with and learn from."

Gillian's passion, method and artistry will be on show for people to absorb and admire when she and sculptor partner Ian Westwood open the doors of their beloved 'Shed 290' studio as part of this year's Surf Coast Arts Trail.

The Trail, on 3 and 4 August, will feature hundreds of artists ranging from hobbyists to professionals, exhibiting and demonstrating skills in mediums ranging from painting, sculpture and textiles to jewellery, ceramics, glassware and performance.

Venues from hinterland to coast will range from private studios like 'Shed 290' to community halls and arts hubs, with works to engage and enthral thousands of visitors.

"We love the Arts Trail, and participate because of the people," Gillian says.

"We have met so many lovely and interesting people who have made their way to 'Shed 290'. We both really want our shed to be a welcoming space to enter, and we love to talk to the people who come in. I really value their feedback."

For more information about the Surf Coast Arts Trail visit surfcoastartstrail.com.au.

Patrons this year can be in the running to win one of three \$250 EFTPOS gift cards by scanning QR check-in codes displayed at venues. The more check-ins people register, the more chances they will have to win.



2024 Council election to be held in October

The Surf Coast Shire Council election will be held 26 October 2024.

The rules for enrolling to vote in council elections have changed.

Those impacted include property owners who live in the Surf Coast Shire only some of the time or not at all, corporate ratepayers,

and also people who are not Australian citizens. If you choose to enrol as one of the eligible people mentioned above, it is compulsory to vote.

Enrolment forms are available at surfcoast.vic.gov.au/enrol. Council requires the completed form by 4pm on Wednesday 7 August 2024.

If you are an Australian citizen and already enrolled for state and federal elections, you are automatically enrolled for elections in the local council where you live.

Check your enrolment to make sure it's up-to-date at vec.vic.gov.au/enrolment.

It's compulsory to enrol with the Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) if you are 18 years or older, an Australian citizen, and lived at your address in the Surf Coast Shire for longer than one month.

How do I vote?

The VEC will mail out postal voting packs during September.

How many councillors will be elected?

Nine councillors will be elected to represent three new wards, proposed to be named:

- Otway Range Ward
- Torquay Ward
- Winchelsea Ward

Three councillors will be elected in each ward.

I'm interested in standing for Council

Learn more about the eligibility criteria, key dates and more at

vec.vic.gov.au/candidates-and-parties.

"I work in hospitality, and living closer to where you work is essential for this industry."

"I'm at a stage where I really need a house with some permanency, and my options are so slim."

"If teachers can't afford to live in this area, we are going to lose them to other places and therefore the schools will be compromised."

We're hearing the economic and social impacts that a lack of affordable housing has on communities. It's why Council has a goal to improve access to affordable residential accommodation.

Our Affordable Accommodation Action Plan 2024 outlines how we will continue to play our role to address the issue.

The Aireys Inlet Affordable Housing Project is a standout project in the plan. A community advisory group co-designed a concept design for the project, which is working towards the development of social and affordable housing

on Council-owned land at 2 Fraser Drive.

Council proposed to enter a 50-year lease for the land with not-for-profit housing provider Housing Choices Australia, for an annual fee of \$1.

Thank you to those who made a submission on the lease. Feedback will be considered by Council at a future meeting.

More detailed planning of the Fraser Drive development and further engagement will occur at a later date.

Thank you also to more than 300 people who provided feedback on the Anglesea Community and Health Hub draft concept plan.

Stay up-to-date with all of our housing projects, including key milestones and FAQs, at surfcoast.vic.gov.au/housing.

Do you have an affordable housing proposal? Contact our Housing Concierge service: info@surfcoast.vic.gov.au

ROAD SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS

Council continues to work towards our goal of making it easier and safer for people to move in and around their communities, with numerous road projects underway.

They include road safety improvements at Bellbrae Primary School. We'll trial new parking restrictions at the school in terms three and four, in response to community concerns about safety at drop-off and pick-up.

In Torquay, we're upgrading the intersection of Bristol Road and Surf Coast Highway. Traffic lights will be installed to improve safety and traffic flow.

Find out more about our road projects at surfcoast.vic.gov.au/roadupgrades.

SEEKING INPUT ON DRAFT URBAN FUTURES STRATEGY

A second round of community consultation is underway to help finalise Council's draft Urban Futures Strategy, which will guide urban growth across the shire during coming decades.

When finalised the strategy will establish a clear policy framework to guide sustainable urban growth within Surf Coast Shire and guide future land use planning at the township and precinct level. It considers a range of constraints, including the need to protect natural environments and significant landscapes.

People can view the draft strategy and supporting documents and make submissions via yoursay.surfcoast.vic.gov.au/USF, or make inquiries via **5261 0600**.

Coming up in the affordable accommodation space:

- We'll work with the **Lorne community and business groups** on a potential key worker housing project
- We'll assist **Housing Challenge 3230** and other Anglesea-based community groups on affordable accommodation options in Anglesea.
- Our **Tiny Houses on Wheels Pilot** will continue. Three conditional permits were issued in the first six months of the pilot.

Victorian Seniors Festival 2024



Save the date: Positive Ageing Month

Positive Ageing Month is taking shape, with free events and activities to be held across the shire this October.

From luncheons and afternoon tea dances, to rock 'n' roll days, resilience sessions and an afternoon at the movies, Council is looking forward to another action-packed festival after welcoming more than 500 people to last year's events.

A calendar of events will be promoted in local news publications and at surfcoast.vic.gov.au/PositiveAgeingMonth.

People aged 55 and over are invited to attend the events, which will celebrate

this year's festival theme: Explore. Engage. Evolve.

Meanwhile, we're preparing to host four Dementia Awareness sessions in Lorne and Deans Marsh from September through to November.

The sessions will focus on understanding, communicating and supporting a person with, or worried about, dementia.

Thanks to Dementia Australia, Great Ocean Road Health and Deans Marsh Cottage for helping us to deliver these sessions. More details will be promoted on our website and in local news publications when finalised.

YOUR SAY

JOIN THE CONVERSATION

yoursay.surfcoast.vic.gov.au

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Phone: **5261 0600**

surfcoast.vic.gov.au/request

OFFICE HOURS:

8.30am - 5pm, Monday to Friday

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