

Bellarine Bayside

Annual Report 2014 -15



**Bellarine
Bayside**
Coastal Management

About us

OUR MANAGEMENT AREA

Bellarine Bayside manages 17 kilometres of Crown land reserves, stretching along the south-western rim of Port Phillip Bay between Point Richards, immediately west of Portarlington, to the southern edge of the St Leonards township.

OUR MISSION

Bellarine Bayside, in partnership with local community groups and residents, sustainably protects, restores and enhances the Northern Bellarine natural and built coastal environment for the benefit and enjoyment of local communities, holidaymakers and visitors.

OUR STRUCTURE

Bellarine Bayside is a not-for-profit Committee of Management that was formed by the Victorian Government to manage the Crown land reserves between Portarlington and St Leonards.

The committee members of Bellarine Bayside are appointed for a term of three years by the Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water under the Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978.

Committee members are selected through a public, skills-based 'expression of interest' process.

Bellarine Bayside has the equivalent of 30 full time staff working within the organisation, this is comprised of coastal planners, conservation officers, holiday park managers, grounds and administration staff.

OUR FUNDING

Bellarine Bayside currently generates around \$6 million in direct revenue annually, with the majority coming from six coastal holiday parks.

Other income is derived from a range of sources including lease, licence and permit fees. Revenue is often supplemented by grants, which are used for special projects.

All funds are used to preserve and protect the natural coastal environmental, while ensuring the local community and visitors have access to quality parks, reserves and facilities. No recurrent funding is received from state or local government.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF TRADITIONAL OWNERS

Bellarine Bayside formally acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the Northern Bellarine Peninsula land and waters, the Wadawurrung People and pay tribute to their Elders, past, present and future.

Our goals

- Understanding, protecting and enhancing the natural environment.
- Connecting communities and the coast.
- Facilitating access, enjoyment and sustainable use of the coast.
- Improving built environments along the foreshore.
- Developing Bellarine Bayside as a sustainable, adaptive and accountable organisation that takes up its role in partnership with others.

The Northern Bellarine Foreshore Plan 2012 outlines the vision and strategic goals for the region over the next 15-20 years.



Chair's report

The 2014-15 year has indeed been a busy and somewhat eventful year for Bellarine Bayside.

Members of the Interim Committee of Management, installed in February 2015 by the Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water, together with Bellarine Bayside management and staff, have been working hard to improve our relationship with our local residents and camping communities.

As a result, the organisation is now more client-focussed, accessible, responsive and consultative. Soon our new website will be up and running which will further enhance our ability to engage with our stakeholders.

Over the last year the organisation has achieved much to be proud of, including a range of on-ground improvements to camping facilities in our holiday parks and foreshore assets such as capital improvements, landscaping, coastal protection works and ecological enhancements.

I'd like to thank our local residents who have enthusiastically participated in numerous community planting days which saw over 2000 plantings of species indigenous to our coastline.

This year, significant funds were invested in the Northern Bellarine Coastal Trail to improve the alignment and safety for users, with three timber pedestrian bridges installed in Portarlington.

Major upgrades also took place at the St Leonards and Indented Head boat ramps, which have significantly improved the operation of the facilities. Coastal erosion at Batman Park in

Indented Head, that had undermined the coastal trail, was halted through the deployment of an innovative sand fence design.

Our magnificent coastline was again the drawcard with the many festivals and events supported by Bellarine Bayside over the last year. The popular Mussel Festival and National Celtic Festival, for which Bellarine Bayside is proud to continue its support, are wonderful occasions, which bring many benefits to the region and showcase our rich and vibrant culture.

Amidst all these achievements, I am pleased to report that Bellarine Bayside's financial position has markedly improved from this time last year through a process of careful and prudent management by the organisation's management team.

Bellarine Bayside has seen considerable change during the year and I would like to acknowledge the work of the previous Committee, led by Vicki Perrett.

Whilst not in the 2014-15 financial year, I convey my gratitude to CEO Kevin Craig following his resignation in September 2015, and thank him for his contribution to the organisation over the previous 18 months.

Our work would not be possible without the support from our primary partners with whom we work very closely, the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning and the City of Greater Geelong.

Importantly, I would like to thank the committed staff of Bellarine Bayside for their passion and hard work in

maintaining and enhancing our 17 km stretch of coastal reserves and infrastructure which saw thousands of day visitors and campers enjoying the Northern Bellarine coastal environment.

I look forward to the coming year and another ambitious work program which will see Bellarine Bayside working in collaboration with its partner agencies and local communities to deliver the goals of the Northern Bellarine Foreshore Plan to the betterment of our fragile and highly valued Northern Bellarine coast.

Diane James AM
Bellarine Bayside Chair

“ As a result, the organisation is now more client-focussed, accessible, responsive and consultative. ”

Working with the community

Goal 1: Understand, protect and enhance the natural environment

COASTAL MONITORING

Bellarine Bayside works together with its partners to ensure a safe, clean and accessible foreshore for the local community, visitors and holidaymakers to enjoy.

In order to understand how coastal processes drive erosion and accretion rates at our local beaches, Bellarine Bayside has implemented an ongoing standardised monitoring program that measures beach cross-section profiles at 13 locations along our coast. Data collected will enable the development of best practice coastal management.

Marine animals, such as seals, sometimes visit our shoreline to rest, dry out, moult or mate. Bellarine Bayside work together with Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) to ensure these animals are kept safe and not disturbed by the general public.

CONSERVATION

Bellarine Bayside conserves and rehabilitates the coastline to help prevent erosion, beautify the foreshore, and improve habitat for birds and other wildlife. A Vegetation Management Plan identifies the main threats to vegetation and provides options for various risks.



Community groups and schools were involved in planting more than 12,000 native plants along the foreshore, and removing environmental weeds.

Participants included schoolchildren from Portarlington and St Leonards Primary Schools, Friends of Point Richards, Gordon TAFE, Green Army workers, and local community members during three community planting days.

Goal 2: Connect communities and the coast

ANNUAL COMMUNITY MEETING

Former weatherman and coastal geomorphologist, Rob Gell, was the guest speaker at Bellarine Bayside's Annual Community Meeting in October 2014. Rob delivered a powerful speech on global sustainability and the effects of climate change to approx. 60 locals.



Bellarine Bayside also awarded community grants to Bellarine Catchment Network and the Rotary Club of Drysdale.

MAJOR COMMUNITY EVENTS

Bellarine Bayside sponsors and provides a range of support services for a wide variety of community events each year.

These events raise our region's national and international profile, stimulate the local economy and increase cultural awareness.



Portarlington's world-renowned **National Celtic Festival 2015** attracted thousands of music-lovers from Australia and overseas. It was another mighty year of bagpipes, bodhrans and wonderful craic!

The **2015 Mussel Festival** was a huge success with bumper crowds, diverse entertainment and a wide assortment of over 100 stalls.



The festival featured local musicians, roving entertainers, art shows, cooking demonstrations, and local beer and wine tastings.

Other major events supported included the **Wreck 2 Reef Open Water Swim Classic**, **BUPA Around the Bay** cycling event, **Mitchelton Bay Cycling Classic** and **Portarlington Gatorade Triathlon**.

COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

Bellarine Catchment Network in partnership with Bellarine Bayside ran five free 'Summer by the Sea' activities, including a rock pool ramble, beach discovery tour and the 'Coastcare Enviro Challenge' for children between 7-15. The event is part of the Coastcare Victoria Program. The World Environment Day Landcare Award was presented to the Friends of Point Richards group by the Corangamite Catchment Management Authority. Bellarine Bayside supports the volunteers in their efforts to rehabilitate

the coastal habitats and biodiversity of the 66 hectare reserve.

Other coastal community activities throughout the year included:

- Annual New Year's Eve Fireworks;
- Caring For Our Bay – Litter Hotspots Program;
- Foreshore coastal walk sponsored by Bellarine Bayside, Geelong Sustainability Group and Locomote.

Goal 3: Facilitating access, enjoyment and sustainable use of the coast

LANDSCAPING AND COASTAL WORKS

Bellarine Bayside has shown strong commitment to the coastal foreshore by investing heavily in and maintaining coastal trail infrastructure. This includes bridges, boardwalks, boat ramps and beautified coastal trails.



New pedestrian bridges were installed over stormwater drains on The Esplanade between Seaforth Drive and Calhoun Road, in Portarlington. These works are part of our long-term goal to upgrade the entire length of the coastal trail, which travels 17km, reaching from Point Richards to St Leonards. Realignment of the pedestrian path ensures the trail is a safe distance from the road. These bridges signified an integral step in the improvement of the coastal trail, which is a fantastic community asset and draw card for visitors.

Further coastal trail upgrades and landscaping improvements were completed at Perrett St and Miller Boys Memorial in St Leonards, Fisher St in Portarlington and Batman Park boardwalk at Indented Head.

Bellarine Bayside maintains five boat ramps along the Northern Bellarine that are free for public use, including Point

Richards, Portarlington, Steeles Rock, Indented Head and St Leonards. Improvement works were completed at the Indented Head boat ramp jetty. A damaged whaler was repaired and missing fenders replaced. The works involved repointing and replacement of damaged bluestones that are an integral element of the jetty formwork.

Redevelopment of the St Leonards and Wrathall Reserve boat ramp car parks have greatly improved access for all. At St Leonards boat ramp the main car park was resealed, storm water drains were treated, lines were marked and the area landscaped after extensive community consultation.

At Wrathall Reserve in Indented Head the car park refurbishment included an asphalt overlay, repairs to and painting of car park barriers and line marking.

Bellarine Bayside obtained Coastcare grant funding to restore the Indented Head saltmarsh. The ongoing works will enhance the condition and



resilience of the saltmarsh through weed control and revegetation.

The Indented Head saltmarsh is 14 ha in size and provides habitat for migrant shorebirds, waterbirds and unique vegetation. It provides a feeding habitat for critically endangered Orange-Bellied Parrots and forms an important part of the mosaic of wetlands that support our internationally-significant Ramsar sites.

COASTAL EROSION MANAGEMENT

With the ever-changing, natural coastal processes and weather conditions, Bellarine Bayside is managing foreshore areas to protect the coast, ensuring it is safe and accessible.

Innovative sand fences were installed at Batman Park, Indented Head to mitigate erosion. Before and after images (*below*) show the substantial improvement these works have made.

Northerly winds during winter can cause significant local erosion at these beaches, which can be made worse by the revetment wall to the north.

Beach renourishment works were completed, together with DELWP, south of St Leonards pier. The deposited sand was shaped into an area approximately 150m in length and 10m wide.

A timber groyne was also constructed just north of St Leonards boat ramp at the creek. This assisted in reducing the accumulation of sand at the boat ramp.



Goal 4: Improved built environments along the foreshore

FORESHORE FACILITIES

Works completed this year involved road maintenance, restoration projects, electrical works and improving communication via signage.

Road maintenance grading works were completed on Boat Road in Portarlington and on Lower Bluff Road in St Leonards. Works included a 380 tonne gravel resheet to prevent further deterioration of the road after rainfall. The road profile was also reshaped to improve drainage.



Restoration of two iconic boatsheds at Indented Head were completed this year. Boatsheds 8 and 11 were rebuilt and decorated under pre-approved guidelines.



Bright, modern new signage has been rolled out along the foreshore for our coastal reserves and parks.

By installing these signs the community can clearly identify the exact public spaces managed by Bellarine Bayside.

Bellarine Bayside is a project partner in the 'Portarlington Safe Harbour Project'. The project is being delivered by Parks Victoria and will provide a much needed improvement to the existing marine infrastructure along with the extension of existing breakwaters and the installation of new breakwaters, wave screens and jetties. It will create local employment and support the important aquaculture industry by adding value to the vibrant mussel industry in Portarlington, and sustaining a growing oyster sector.

PORTARLINGTON HOLIDAY PARK AND SEASONAL CAMPING RESERVES



Several community listening posts enabled Bellarine Bayside to hear the wishes and concerns of campers.

As a result, investment back into the holiday parks this year included:

- Tree planting, new signage and improved site delineation in the seasonal camping reserves;

- New playground and basketball court at Portarlington;
- Conversion of the former Arthur's Café to a camp kitchen and multi-use recreational room;
- Outdoor facilities upgrades at Indented Head;
- Camp kitchen refurbishment at Batman Park; and
- A new substation electrical box at Portarlington, with new circuit breakers and power switching equipment installed.

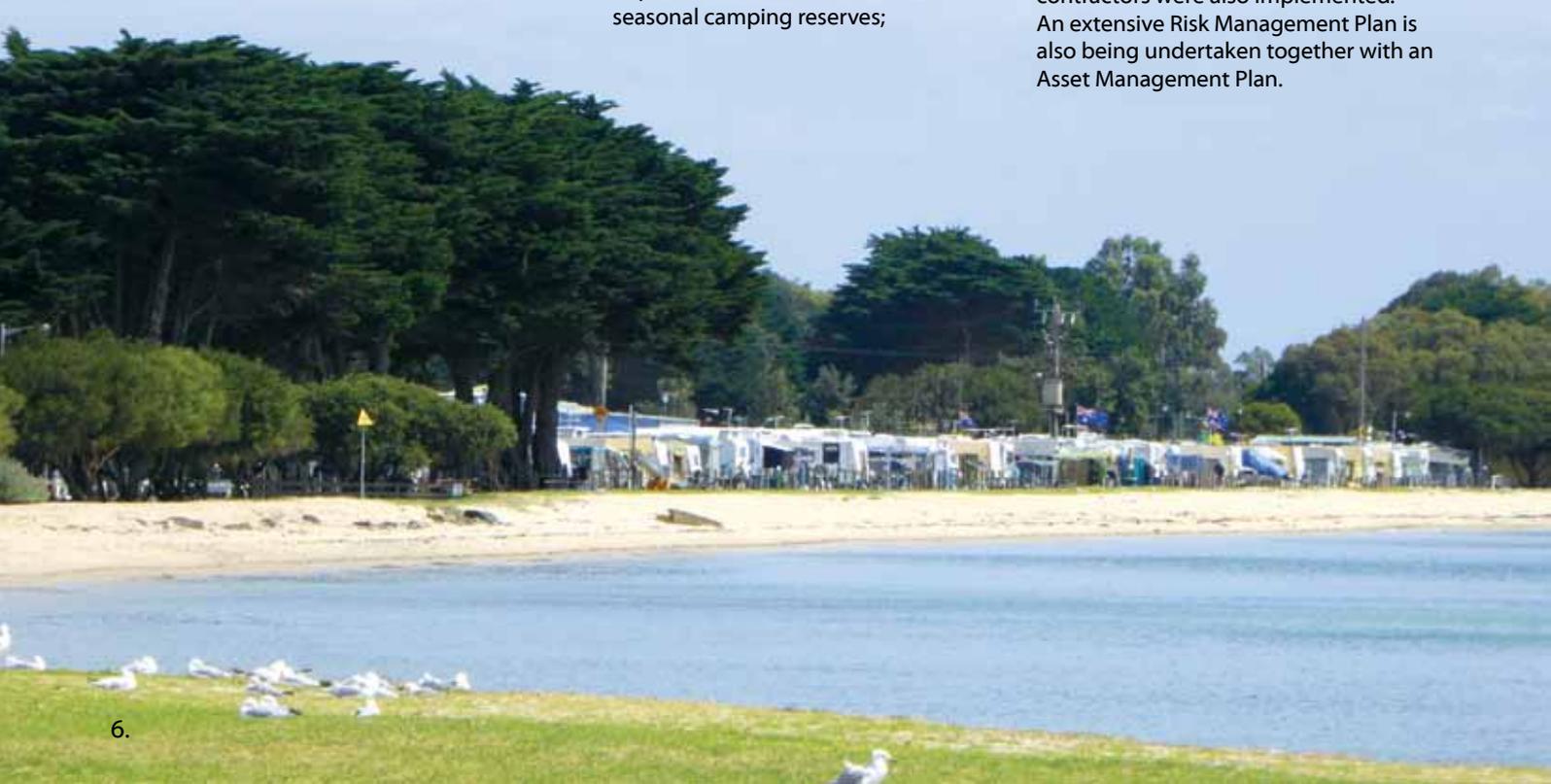
A 'Camping and Accommodation Strategy' will be developed to guide future planning for the holiday park reserves.

Goal 5: Develop Bellarine Bayside as a sustainable, accountable and adaptive organisation

The Interim Committee, appointed in February 2015, focussed on building stronger consultative relationships with stakeholders, holidaymakers, the local community and staff.

To meet good governance standards and accountability, the operating budget was thoroughly reviewed, listening posts were organised and contractors were appointed through a tender process.

A communication plan is in development to guide the organisation in its engagement with local community stakeholders, residents and campers. Updated OH&S systems for staff and contractors were also implemented. An extensive Risk Management Plan is also being undertaken together with an Asset Management Plan.



Financial overview

Bellarine Bayside has enjoyed a very successful year and reports an operating surplus for the year of \$753 000, a substantial improvement on the deficit in 2014. As cash flow from operations has increased three-fold and bolstered our end of financial year cash holdings to \$1.83 million, we are in a much improved financial position to commence our 2015-16 operations.

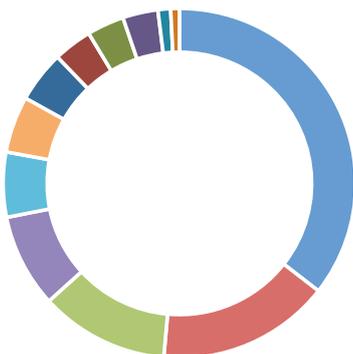
Operations generated revenues of \$5.96 million, up \$321 000 or 5.7% on the previous year. Holiday parks accounted for 92% of total revenues, with Portarlington contributing 75%, Indented Head 12% and St Leonards 5%. Grants and subsidies from State Government and other sources totalled \$345 000 (5% of total) and revenue from foreshore leases, licences and permits was \$177 000 (2% of total).

For the year, funds of \$943 000 were applied to capital, renewals and project works in the parks and along the foreshore that have already been highlighted throughout the report.

To view the full financial statements for 2014-15 please visit www.bbfc.com.au.

Expense - Types 2014 -15

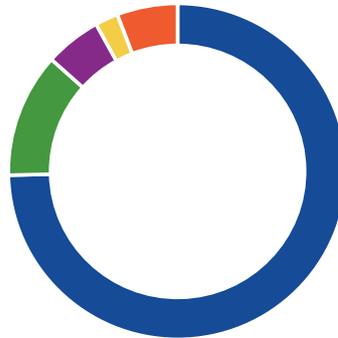
% of total \$5,206,183



- Staff employment costs: **36%**
- Repairs & maintenance: **16%**
- Depreciation: **12%**
- Electricity, gas, water: **9%**
- Coastal management: **6%**
- Cleaning: **5%**
- Waste, garbage: **5%**
- Contract labour: **4%**
- Motor vehicle operating: **3%**
- ICT: **3%**
- Security: **1%**
- Insurances: **1%**

Revenue Sources 2014 -15

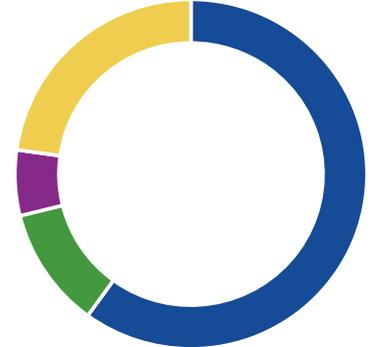
% of total \$5,959,291



- Portarlington Holiday Park: **75%**
- Indented Head Holiday Park: **12%**
- St Leonards Holiday Park: **5%**
- Foreshore Reserves & Assets: **2%**
- Grants: **6%**

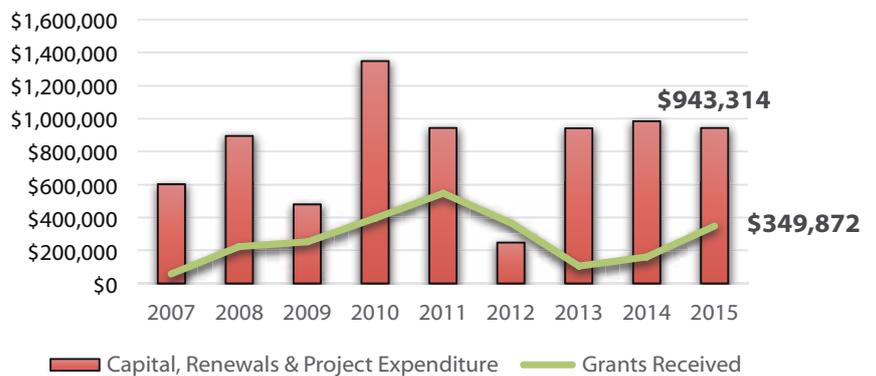
Expense Categories 2014 -15

% of total \$5,206,183



- Portarlington Holiday Park: **60%**
- Indented Head Holiday Park: **11%**
- St Leonards Holiday Park: **6%**
- Foreshore Reserves & Assets: **23%**

Capital, Renewals & Project Activity



Other financial highlights included:

- A significant reduction in operating expenses which decreased \$778 000 from \$5.37 million to \$4.59 million – the rationalisation of staffing costs, favourable pricing for some large supply and service contracts and close monitoring and cost containment across most areas of expense contributed to this improvement;
- A three-fold increase in cash flow from operations rising from \$498 000 in 2014 to \$1.57 million – the majority of this increase is attributable to reduced costs and improved operating efficiency;
- End of year cash holdings improved significantly rising from \$1.08 million as at 30 June 2014 to \$1.83 million.



Looking ahead

A number of coastal works projects and improvements have been identified in our 2015-16 Corporate Plan, which is available to download from our website.

We hope to achieve a range of activities in the coming year, including:

- Unsafe tree removal and replacement landscaping at Portarlington Holiday Park;
- On-going improvement of the Indented Head saltmarsh through weed control, revegetation and community education;
- Development of a Camping and Accommodation Strategy;
- Realignment and improvements to the coastal trail to increase safety;
- Boat ramp repairs at Indented Head;
- Upgrades to camper amenities and infrastructure in our holiday parks;
- Improvements to the Indented Head Community Hall;
- Continuing to rehabilitate the coastline to help prevent erosion and beautify our foreshore;
- Road maintenance within our coastal camping reserves.

