



**Bellarine
Bayside**

Coastal Management

Bellarine Bayside Foreshore
Committee of Management

ANNUAL REPORT 2020–21

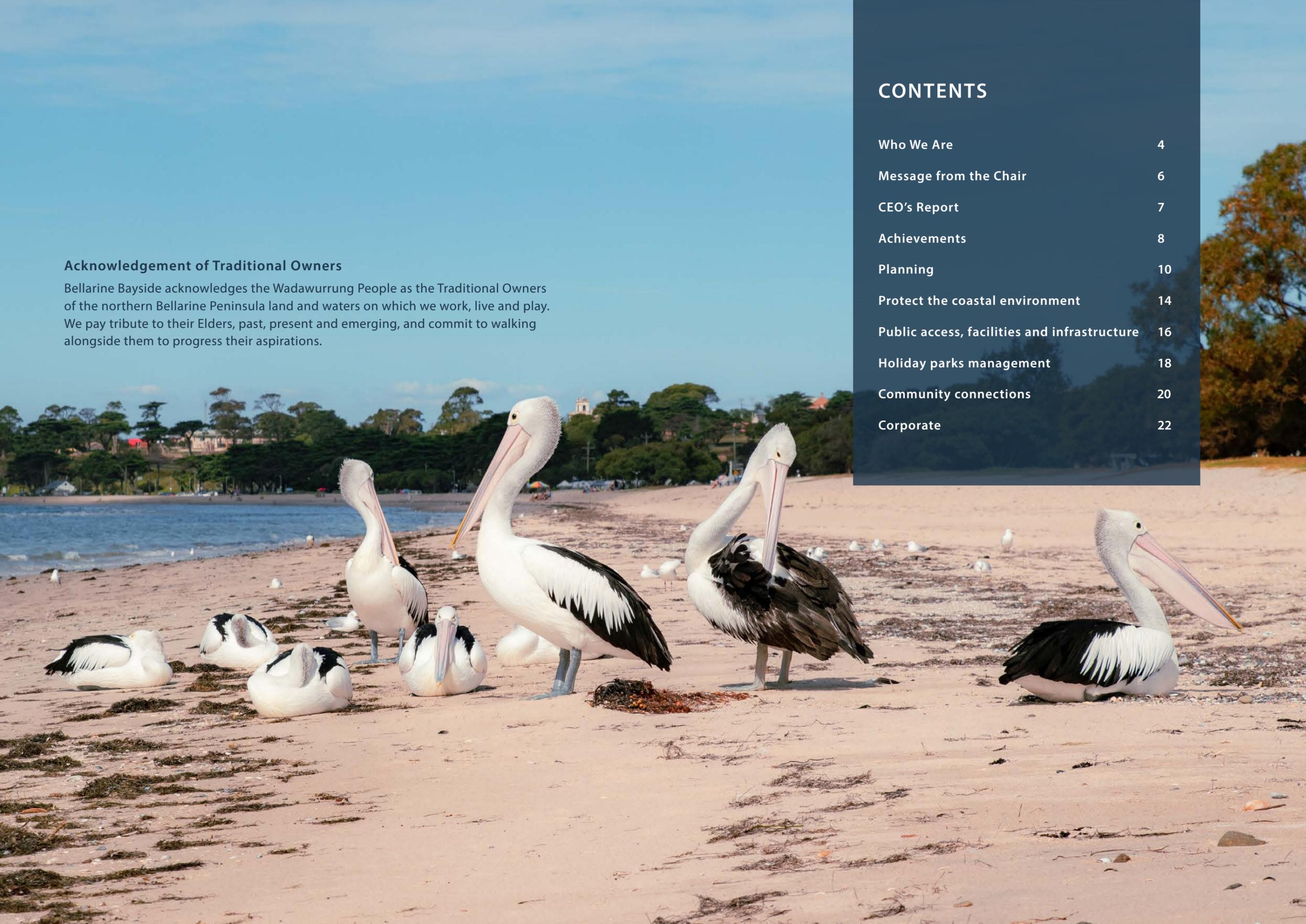


Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners

Bellarine Bayside acknowledges the Wadawurrung People as the Traditional Owners of the northern Bellarine Peninsula land and waters on which we work, live and play. We pay tribute to their Elders, past, present and emerging, and commit to walking alongside them to progress their aspirations.

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Who we are

Bellarine Bayside Foreshore Committee of Management (Bellarine Bayside) is a not-for-profit, Category 1 coastal Committee of Management established in 1994 by the Victorian Government to manage coastal Crown land in accordance with the *Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978* (CLR Act) to provide environmental, social and economic benefits for the Victorian community. We manage our Crown land reserve in accordance with the CLR Act, the *Marine and Coastal Act 2018*, the Statement of Expectation issued by the Minister and related subordinate legislation and policy set by the Victorian Government.

THE COASTAL RESERVE

The coastal reserve managed by Bellarine Bayside is a 17 kilometre stretch of coastline on the northern Bellarine Peninsula, comprising approximately 200 hectares of coastal land of significant cultural, environmental and social importance.

OUR VISION FOR THE COASTAL RESERVE

A protected and enhanced northern Bellarine foreshore which has highly valued cultural heritage, distinctive coastal character and environmental assets for the enjoyment of the community.

OUR FUNDING

Bellarine Bayside currently generates around \$7 million in direct revenue annually, all of which is reinvested back into maintaining and improving coastal Crown land, public infrastructure and holiday park facilities. The majority of this revenue is derived through fees from the six Crown land holiday parks we manage. Other revenue is derived from a range of sources including lease, licence and permit fees, and supplemented by grants for specific projects. No recurrent funding is received from commonwealth, state or local government.

What we do

PLANNING

We work collaboratively with Traditional Owners, government departments, partner organisations, key stakeholders and industry experts to deliver projects that protect cultural heritage, focus on meeting the highest sustainability standards, result in mutually beneficial outcomes and are supported by evidence-based decision making.

PROTECT THE COASTAL ENVIRONMENT

Protecting and enhancing the natural environment and cultural heritage on the northern Bellarine coastal reserve are among our highest priorities. We have a comprehensive native vegetation rehabilitation program, and incorporate community education and involvement opportunities to encourage appreciation of natural and cultural values.

PUBLIC ACCESS, FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

We take pride in, and place high value on, providing and maintaining appealing, accessible and safe spaces and amenities for community and visitor involvement, enjoyment and recreation. This includes playgrounds, car parks, a community hall, amenity blocks, boat ramps and jetties.

HOLIDAY PARKS

We operate six holiday parks and camping reserves in Portarlington, Indented Head and St Leonards, facilitating over 115,000 visitor nights annually. Situated in absolute beachfront locations, our holiday parks offer a range of

accommodation options to more than 19,000 guests each year who contribute significantly to the region's economy.

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

A diverse approach to engagement and communication with coastal users enables us to understand use of the coastal reserve and local values. We focus on positive relationships, building mutual trust and collaboration, allowing us to realise a high level of customer service and ensure sustainable and shared use of the coast.

CORPORATE

We ensure good governance and aim for excellence in core business delivery and customer service by fostering and enhancing existing partnerships, investigating business growth opportunities and supporting tenant business to realise financial stability. We issue and manage leases, licences and permits to provide benefits to the public and ensure use of the coastal reserve is sustainable, equitable and safe.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS	SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM
In 2020/21 the Bellarine Bayside Committee consisted of ten Committee members:	Bruce Elliot <i>Chief Executive Officer</i>
Melanie Rogers <i>Chair</i>	Justin Smith <i>Planning and Environment Manager</i>
John Hartigan <i>Deputy Chair</i>	David Goldie <i>Operations Manager</i>
Dr Sandra Brizga	Wayne Coots <i>Finance and Business Manager</i>
Helene Cameron	Paul McConachy <i>Holiday Parks Manager</i>
Gregory Lewis	
Dr Kenneth Latta PSM	
Nicole Newman	
Sheena Walters	
Cameron Quinten	
Richard Davies	

Further information on the Committee and Senior Management Team can be found on our website at www.bellarinebayside.com.au/about-us/our-people

Message from the Chair



The 2020-21 financial year has been another challenging year, but it has also shown just how resilient our people, visitors and communities are. We have all adapted to live with ever-changing circumstances, focusing on what can be done rather than what cannot. As an organisation, Bellarine Bayside has been busy working away throughout the year and come out the other side with greater determination, strengthened internal capacity and a sound plan for the future.

A highlight for the year was providing the Northern Bellarine Coastal and Marine Management Plan (the CMMP) to the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) for submission to the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change for approval. The CMMP has been developed through extensive public and stakeholder consultation and we are pleased to have reached a final version that incorporates relevant feedback and is endorsed by Wadawurrung, the Traditional Custodians of the land we manage.

The Committee held a strategic workshop in March with the CEO and Senior Management Team. The workshop considered strategic drivers and organisational imperatives beyond the scope of the CMMP and identified risks, strengths, weaknesses and priorities. Management then distilled the outcomes of the workshop alongside relevant actions in the CMMP to create a three-year corporate plan. This internal document will guide implementation of the CMMP and organisational improvement for the next three years.

As an organisation funded primarily through fees for our holiday park operations, we were thankful that closures to our parks due to COVID-19 occurred mostly in the off-peak season this year. Greater uptake in domestic and intrastate travel saw our shoulder and off-peak casual campsite and

cabin bookings higher than in previous years, which helped offset COVID-19 related income losses. This resulted in a strong year financially allowing us to reactivate a number of projects and works scheduled to occur along the coast and in our holiday parks.

Our strong relationships with partner organisations have been further nurtured this year to achieve great, mutually beneficial outcomes that also benefited our communities. Better Boating Victoria, a division of the Victorian Fisheries Authority, have been a new partner we are working closely with on boating infrastructure on the coastal reserve. The first stage of upgrades to the Point Richards boating facility, to expand the car parking, are underway and we are now working in partnership to finalise a detailed design to improve the marine side infrastructure.

We have continued to work closely with DELWP and I thank the regional staff for their sound advice and guidance on a number of topics. This year they worked closely with us to implement the Victorian Government's \$8 million Port Phillip Bay Beaches Renourishment program, planning for and undertaking large scale beach renourishment works at Indented Head and St Leonards.

I would like to thank our CEO, senior managers and all staff for their efforts during another challenging 12 months and acknowledge the dedication and passion they have for achieving the goals of the organisation and our vision for the foreshore. Finally, my thanks to my fellow Committee members for their commitment, enthusiasm and sound governance of the organisation. Like many of us, they have been challenged to higher levels of flexibility and adaptability to adjust to the new issues and have provided thoughtful, steady and sound leadership throughout the year.

MELANIE ROGERS
BELLARINE BAYSIDE CHAIR

CEO's Report



It's hard to believe that 12 months have passed since I stepped into this role. Settling into a new organisation in the midst of a global pandemic has been an interesting experience, but one that I have enjoyed, nonetheless. During this time, I have been impressed by the quality, commitment and dedication shown by our people. This was highlighted in the face of the challenges posed by COVID-19, as our people demonstrated their adaptability and supportive nature, and I commend them for continuing to achieve great outcomes and maintaining a positive organisational culture.

COVID-19 was a central element of the year as it resulted in changes to the way we operate, services we could deliver and a change to the pattern with which we generated revenue. We reviewed and prioritised expenditure to ensure we could support our team and continue to provide safe and enjoyable coastal experiences for all. Our incident response team, established at the outset of the pandemic, monitored and recommended best practice COVID-19 procedures for all areas of our operations, and we adopted a COVIDSafe Plan in September that ensures we meet public health directives and provide a safe workplace.

Having such measures in place allowed us to respond quickly to the changing restrictions throughout the year and deliver timely communications to staff, visitors and the local community. This was crucial for our holiday park operations to reopen, several times, following easing of restrictions. We are grateful for the resilience and support of our guests who took this in their stride and had the phones running hot to return as soon as possible.

We achieved some fantastic milestones this year including finalising the high voltage power upgrade in our holiday park at Portarlinton and kicking off the Indented Head master plan. Our biggest infrastructure project fully delivered during the year was the upgrade of the Indented

Head Tennis Court and Basketball Facility, delivered in part via a \$66,000 City of Greater Geelong grant to the Indented Head Community Association, with Bellarine Bayside providing matching funds and in-kind project management. It looks fantastic and we are proud to have enhanced the end result by integrating Wadawurrung artwork into the outskirts of the court, celebrating the local cultural heritage of the coastal reserve.

Looking ahead, we hope that the roadmap to recovery will allow us to provide consistent, high-quality holiday experiences once again. We are planning to undertake some exciting additions to improve our range of accommodation offerings for visitors to the northern Bellarine. All going well, we will begin staged refurbishment and upgrades to a range of holiday park amenities and services.

On the coastal reserve, we will be looking to finalise upgrades of the Bellarine Coastal Trail to be a finished with a sturdy surface and wider where possible, to allow for ease of use, and roll out new directional signage in stages. We will continue the Indented Head master planning process, implementation of our sustainability program, and landscaping and furniture upgrades. Last, but certainly not least, we will continue our day-to-day works including conservation and rehabilitation, maintaining the open spaces, upkeep of a wide range of public facilities on the coastal reserve, and monitoring beach erosion and implementing mitigation measures.

I would like to acknowledge the strategic direction provided by our committee and the advice and guidance provided by staff at the Regional Office of DELWP. Both have been critical throughout the year. I also recognise the passion and commitment of our partner agencies, key stakeholders, visitors and communities. I am looking forward to continuing to build and strengthen our relationships in these areas.

It has been a significant year of change for our team and I am proud to be leading an adaptive and resilient group of people. I thank each of them for their commitment towards achieving our goals which has been unwavering despite the significant personal impact COVID-19 has had on all individuals. I extend this recognition also to our volunteers who demonstrated similar commitment and were willing to return at the drop of a hat to help protect and restore the environment.

BRUCE ELLIOT
BELLARINE BAYSIDE CEO

Caring for our coast

ABOUT US

22 permanent staff
increasing to more than

40 during peak holiday
season with the
addition of short-term
employees

Manage **17km**
(approximately 200 hectares)

of coastal Crown land reserve,
including one of the largest areas of
remnant bushland on the Bellarine
Peninsula

REVENUE

\$7.2 million*
reinvested into the coastal reserve

LEASES AND LICENCES

39 leases and licences

issued to community clubs, commercial
venues and private boat sheds, allowing
activities, goods and services to be
delivered to an appreciative and engaged
local community

HOLIDAY PARKS

484 permanent and **378**
seasonal tourist sites

20 tourist
cabins **384**
Twelve Month
Permit sites

115,000+* visitor nights
provided accommodation for

19,000+* visitors to the
northern Bellarine Peninsula

who added approximately
\$15 million
to the local economy

2* large/group
accommodation bookings

PUBLIC ACCESS, FACILITIES AN INFRASTRUCTURE

More than **1900 hours**
spent mowing maintaining



57,600,000
square metre
(5760 hectares) of turf

410
Bins Emptied approximately
20,000* times

27 amenity blocks
(public and holiday park)

14 playgrounds
including the largest
public playground
on the northern
Bellarine Peninsula

20
public BBQs

190
picnic tables

5
Boat ramps



COASTAL ENVIRONMENT

**OVER
12,000**
native trees, shrubs
and grasses and
groundcovers planted



240 hours
of pest animal management

More than **2000 hours** of weed
control including mulching, brush
cutting, hand weeding and
spraying.

Facilitated more than **450***
volunteer hours on the
coastal reserve through
our volunteer groups,
community planting
days and the support of
external organisations



14* activities
were run throughout the
year engaging more than

170* people in environmental
and cultural activities

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Key consultation topics:
• Indented Head master plan
• Erosion mitigation strategies

Key media topics:
• COVID-19 response
• Bellarine Coastal Trail
• Indented Head Tennis Court and
Basketball Facility

50 print media updates discussed
a range of topics and projects

Key topics our community were interested
in finding out more about included the
Bellarine Coastal Trail, litter, boat ramps,
seagrass wrack, erosion and COVID-19
changes to services

5366 Facebook followers
1524 Insta followers
80 LinkedIn followers

EVENTS AND PERMITS

20 vendor and activity services are
facilitated through issuing permits and
hall hire to commercial and community
groups who provide services to the local
community and visitors

21* public events including
large annual events and
regular markets on the
coastal reserve

13* foreshore permits for
private use of the coastal
reserve other than personal
recreation

4* foreshore weddings

*Signifies numbers impacted by COVID-19

Planning

We work collaboratively with Traditional Owners, government departments, partner organisations, key stakeholders and industry experts to deliver projects that protect cultural heritage, focus on meeting the highest sustainability standards, result in mutually beneficial outcomes and are supported by evidence-based decision making.

COASTAL AND MARINE MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Northern Bellarine Coastal and Marine Management Plan 2020-25 (the CMMP) sets a vision, goals and strategic actions to guide the management of the coastal Crown land reserves on the northern Bellarine Peninsula. Extensive consultation has ensured that Traditional Owner aspirations, community values and partner agency views are reflected alongside legislative requirements and state government policy framework.

The final CMMP has been endorsed by Wadawurrung and provided to the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) for submission to the Minister for approval. Although it is yet to be approved, initiatives detailed within the CMMP are being implemented and it is currently guiding works along the northern Bellarine coastal reserve.

CORPORATE PLAN

Supporting the CMMP is our Corporate Plan, an internal document to complement the coastal reserve focus of the CMMP with a strategic organisational focus. It includes the development of corporate enablers such as culture and organisational capacity, and provides greater insight into business-as-usual programs (i.e. those delivering recurrent works) which are not fully captured within the CMMP.

To ensure we achieve the eight goals within the CMMP, the Corporate Plan sets clear outcomes to implement the CMMP for a three-year period. The Corporate Plan will inform development of annual works programs and budgets, taking into account resource limitations.



INDENTED HEAD MASTER PLAN

In 2020-21, we began development of a master plan for approximately 3.5 hectares of coastal Crown land at Indented Head. Master plans are a dynamic document that provide a vision and framework to guide the future use and development of an area while providing detail on proposed facilities to meet the needs of the community balanced with cultural asset protection and environmental enhancement.

Master plans are developed through consultation with Traditional Owners, coastal users, partner agencies and stakeholders to identify aspirations, opportunities and actions.

Consultation held during March-April 2021 identified the importance of protecting the natural environment, protecting and acknowledging cultural heritage, improving accessibility, limiting development or changes to the area, and improvement to both public and holiday park facilities such as amenity blocks, the Bellarine Coastal Trail, coastal furniture, playgrounds and landscaping.

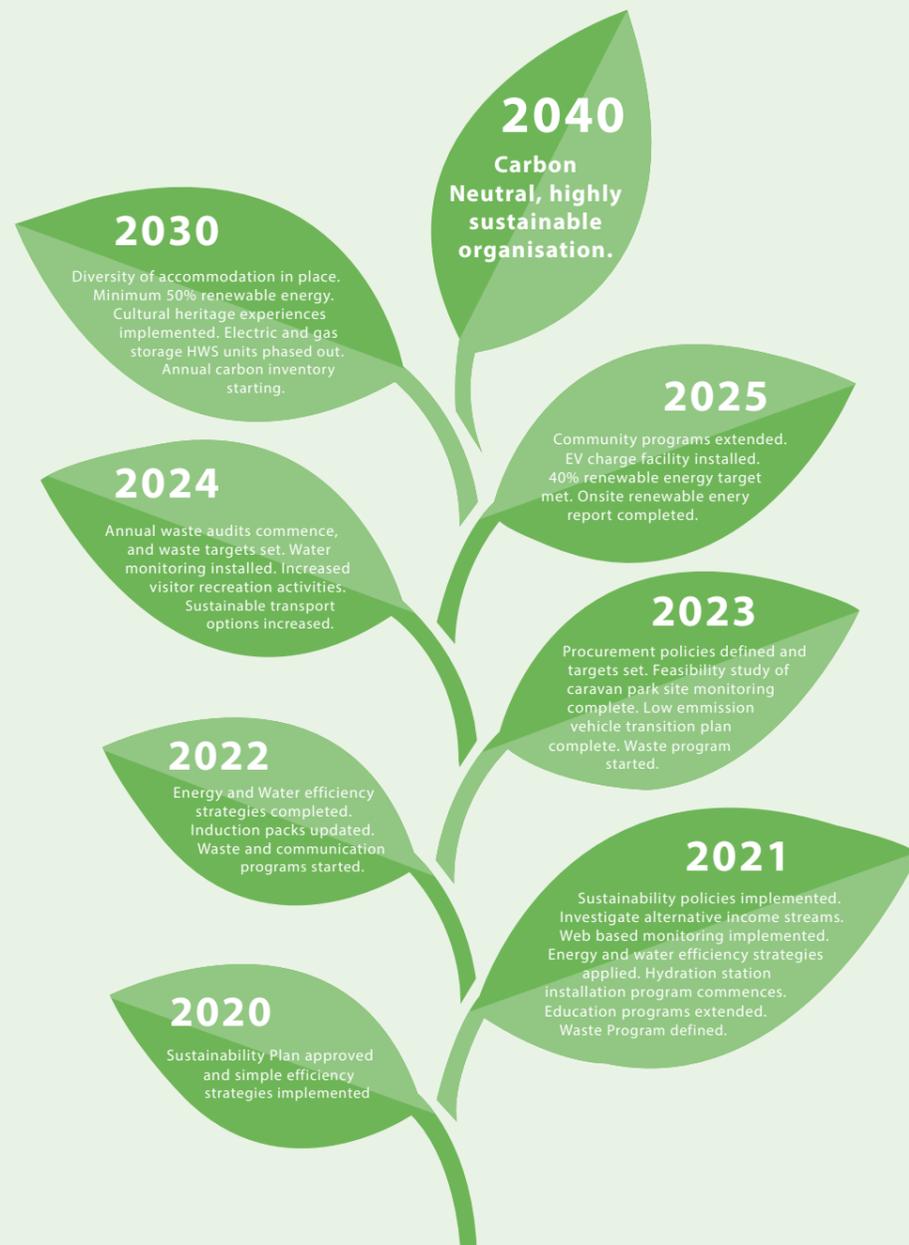
Development of the plan will continue into the 2021-22 financial year.

SUSTAINABILITY PROJECT

Bellarine Bayside is committed to environmental stewardship and reducing our environmental footprint through continual improvement and integration of sustainability at the core of our activities.

In 2020-21 we launched our sustainability program to define a consistent direction and provide guidance in relation to planning, implementing, and delivering a sustainable Bellarine Bayside. An initial sustainability audit was conducted to understand our resource use, identify areas for improvement and provide recommendations to develop a tangible action plan and a 20-year timeline towards achieving carbon neutrality. Relevant policies will be produced to support implementation.

The primary role of the sustainability program is to reduce energy and water use and progressively embed sustainability into all our core business functions and foster a sustainability culture. It will also guide our interaction with the community and stakeholders on sustainability and environmental issues, improving our advocacy and recognition as a leader in sustainability.



KEY PARTNERSHIPS IN 2020-21

Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation

- Coastal infrastructure development and maintenance projects, ensuring protection of cultural assets
- Cultural education programs and training.

DELWP

- Beach renourishment projects at key erosion hotspot locations including adjacent Andersons Reserve, Wrathall Reserve and two St Leonards sites.
- Seawall replacement projects at Bengalat Reserve and St Leonards Yacht Club & Motor Squadron.
- Victorian Coastal Monitoring Program.

Better Boating Victoria

- Point Richards boating facility car park upgrade.
- Point Richards boating facility protection rock wall project.
- Northern Bellarine boat ramp maintenance program.

Parks Victoria

- Portarlington harbour western rock wall project.
- Beach enhancement projects.



COASTAL MONITORING AND MAPPING

While coastal processes and erosion are most apparent after storm events, natural processes continually shift sand in changing directions along the northern Bellarine foreshore. Our projects and partnerships to monitor and map coastal processes continued in 2020-21. In partnership with DELWP, we determine the most appropriate approach to address erosion hotspots as they are detected.

We employ two main approaches to mitigate the impacts of erosion. The first is by stabilising primary dune areas with coastal vegetation, making dunes less vulnerable to both wind and wave erosion, and effectively creating a buffer at the top of the beach. This has proven to be effective during storms in 2020-21. The second is beach renourishment works, which build up the beach and provide a buffer against erosion.

In 2020-21, DELWP began to implement the Victorian Government's \$8 million Port Phillip Bay Beaches Renourishment program at Indented Head and St Leonards. While our annual renourishment program focuses on key hotspots that are placing assets (built, environmental or cultural) at risk, the larger DELWP renourishment program adds significant volumes of new sand to the system that will remain available for many years.

Using these two approaches that recognise and support natural processes is preferred as they ensure we don't adversely impact the connectivity between ecosystems, such as between land and sea. Hard or engineered measures, such as groynes or rock walls, are considered, but only if advised by a coastal processes expert based on modelling.

We will continue to monitor and further develop long term strategies to manage impacts of erosion.

Protect the coastal environment

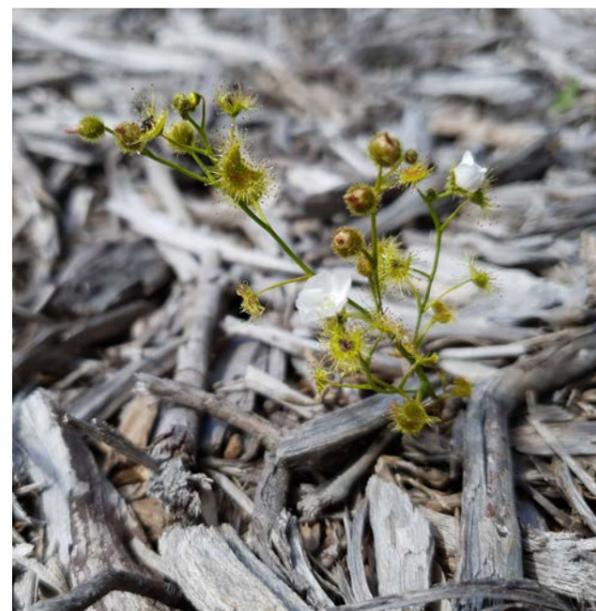
Protecting and enhancing natural environment and cultural heritage on the northern Bellarine coastal reserve are among our highest priorities. We have a comprehensive native vegetation rehabilitation program, and incorporate community education and involvement opportunities to encourage appreciation of natural and cultural values.

PROTECTING CULTURAL HERITAGE

We are privileged to manage coastal Crown land that forms part of Wadawurrung Country and are committed to protecting, restoring and promoting traditional cultural values in collaboration with the Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation (WTOAC) to achieve effective management of our coastal regions.

In 2020-21 we continued to work closely with the WTOAC to provide cultural heritage briefings and education programs, and to undertake cultural heritage assessments on coastal infrastructure projects. We initiated development of an Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Land Management Agreement (ACHLMA) with the WTOAC which will strengthen our capacity to protect and manage cultural heritage on the coastal reserve.

We commissioned two artworks by a Wadawurrung artist to acknowledge, celebrate and connect those who view the works with the rich Wadawurrung culture and history of the coastal reserve.



ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION AND HABITAT PROTECTION (FLORA AND FAUNA)

Conserving and restoring native flora and fauna habitat on the coastal reserve is critical to preserve the natural values for future generations.

Our conservation highlights in 2020-21 include:

- Planting over 12,000 native trees, shrubs, grasses and groundcovers along the entire coastal reserve.
- Securing funding to build on our existing Red-capped Plover monitoring and habitat restoration in partnership with Birdlife Victoria. This has been supported by the Victorian Government through the Port Phillip Bay Fund.
- Around 425 new Hairy Spinifex (*Spinifex sericeus*) seedlings have been planted along our coastline, building on an ongoing project to replace introduced Sea Wheat Grass (*Thinopyrum junceiforme*) and aid in erosion management.

ESTABLISHING A COASTAL BUFFER AND CORRIDOR

Our first approach to mitigate the impacts of natural coastal processes and erosion is through stabilising the primary dune area with coastal vegetation. This has a two-fold benefit as it effectively creates a buffer at the top of the beach and improves habitat connectivity along the coast.

Through establishing a vegetation corridor along the primary dune, we are supporting natural processes such as movement, colonisation and interbreeding of flora and fauna, and making dunes less vulnerable to both wind and wave erosion without impacting natural coastal processes. This has proven to be effective during storms and king tides experienced in 2020-21.



PEST MANAGEMENT

In Victoria, landowners and land managers have a responsibility to take all reasonable steps to prevent the spread of – and as far as possible eradicate – established pest animals from their land.

Completion of our survey and mapping efforts, initiated in the 2019-20 financial year, highlighted that a lack of consistent effort in the past has led to pest animal problems across our reserves, particularly in the 62-hectare Point Richards Flora and Fauna Reserve and our holiday park in Portarlington. In addition to protecting native flora and fauna, pest animal management preserves cultural heritage, sustains ecosystems by supporting natural ecological processes, reduces hazards and protects assets.

This year, we advanced our pest management program to develop an integrated rabbit control regime. This was initiated by a reduction of harbour and subsequent release of Calicivirus in the Point Richards Flora and Fauna Reserve. We also undertook fumigation of warrens and continued remote camera monitoring to determine activity and success of control methods.



EDUCATION FOR CONSERVATION

Our Bayside Alive! program inspires our visitors and community through delivery of fun and accessible activities that raise awareness and encourage respect of cultural heritage and the coastal environment. Activities cover a range of topics from partnering with Wadawurrung to learn about Country, exploring the diverse habitats of our region, to learning how to protect nature through everyday actions.

Key activities of the Bayside Alive! program in the last 12 months include:

- 160 participants engaged over 8 summer activities.
- 13 cadets engaged in six sessions of the autumn Bellarine Nature Cadets program.
- Co-facilitated a whole-of-school environment day for St Leonards Primary School.
- One community planting day with 15 attendees planting more than 700 indigenous trees, grasses and shrubs.
- Supporting Bellarine Catchment Network at the Portarlington Primary School 'edventure' day.

Public access, facilities and infrastructure

We take pride in, and place high value on, providing and maintaining appealing, accessible and safe spaces and amenities for community and visitor involvement, enjoyment and recreation. This includes playgrounds, car parks, a community hall, amenity blocks, boat ramps and jetties.

INDENTED HEAD TENNIS COURT UPGRADE

One of our biggest projects completed in 2020-21 was the upgrade of the Indented Head Tennis Court and Basketball Facility at Wrathall Reserve.

The facility has been entirely rebuilt and features a state-of-the-art Rebound Ace Synpave surface on a new concrete base, two basketball towers, and modern standard fencing. The new facility was delivered in part via a \$66,000 City of Greater Geelong grant to the Indented Head Community Association, with Bellarine Bayside providing matching funds and in-kind project management.

Not only is the result a high standard community sporting facility, but also a unique public art piece as we engaged Billy-Jay O'Toole, a proud Wadawurrung man and artist, to design artwork for integration into the court surround. The mural was awarded a National Trust of Australia (Victoria) Heritage Award for Interpretation of a Heritage Place, and depicts Wadawurrung stories, reflecting the importance and use of the area for Wadawurrung People. The artwork was partially supported by the Victorian Government through the Distinctive Areas and Landscapes program.

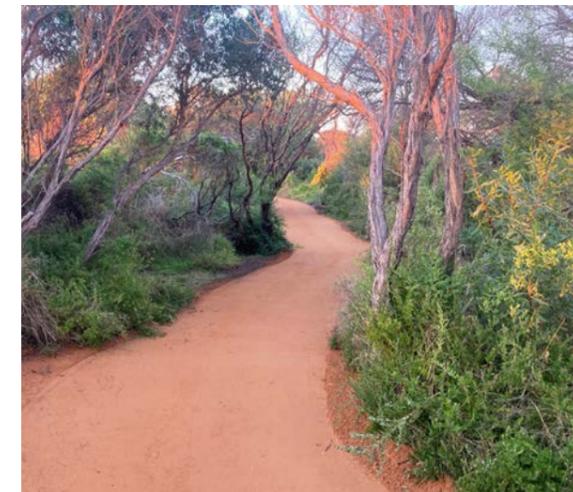


BELLARINE COASTAL TRAIL

Meandering along the edge of Port Phillip Bay, the Bellarine Coastal Trail is a popular connection between Portarlington, Indented Head and St Leonards.

This year we undertook significant upgrades between Grassy Point and St Leonards to reconstruct the trail with Gherang Gravel, forming a sturdy surface and shaping it to allow appropriate drainage. The trail was also widened where possible to allow for improved shared use and realigned in some parts to provide greater protection for our foreshore and a more pleasing route.

We are excited to have launched new branding and signage for the Bellarine Coastal Trail this year, supported by the Victorian Government through the Distinctive Areas and Landscapes program. It has created a recognisable identity for the trail and will assist users with navigation and reminders of trail etiquette.



POINT RICHARDS BOATING FACILITY UPGRADES

Following last year's announcement by the State Government to invest \$47.2 million into upgrading six priority boat ramps across Victoria, the first stage of upgrades to the Point Richards boating facility commenced in 2020-21. Working closely with Better Boating Victoria, the car and boat trailer parking capacity has begun to be expanded with traffic flow around the facility also to be improved.

The second stage of upgrades will involve improvements to vessel access and egress at the facility by reducing the build-up of seagrass and sand. A preliminary design for a rock wall has been developed with input from the boating community and a coastal processes study, and further modelling is being undertaken to determine any impacts on coastal processes.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND FACILITIES

Throughout the year we deliver a range of projects aimed at supporting safe, accessible and enjoyable coastal experiences for all. Our team maintain and upgrade existing facilities such as boat ramps, seawalls, playgrounds, the Coastal Trail, buildings, roads and car parking. We also seek to implement new facilities where possible that both benefit our coastal user groups and protect the fragile natural environment.

We undertook a number of improvement projects during 2020-21, consulting with foreshore users where possible. Utilising local knowledge helps us to reach the best possible outcome when balancing community need with protection of the coastal reserve.

Projects undertaken (some of which will continue into 2021-22) include:

- Began construction of a \$1,000,000 car/trailer parking upgrade at Point Richards in partnership with Better Boating Victoria.
- Wrathall Reserve tennis and basketball facility court upgrade for \$120,000 in partnership with the City of Greater Geelong and the Indented Head Community Association.
- Renewals to St Leonards boat ramp jetty.
- Purchased a new John Deere wide deck mower to reduce mowing time.
- Repair, maintenance and repainting of the Indented Head Community Hall windows.
- Painting to refresh infrastructure, including all boat ramps and the Wrathall Reserve BBQ rotunda.
- Renewal of further sections of the Bellarine Coastal Trail to be a wider, safer standard.
- Significant beach renourishment works in partnership with DEWLP at Andersons Reserve.



Holiday parks management

We operate six holiday parks and camping reserves in Portarlington, Indented Head and St Leonards, facilitating over 115,000 visitor nights annually. Situated in absolute beachfront locations, our holiday parks offer a range of accommodation options to more than 19,000 guests each year who contribute significantly to the region's economy.



COVID-19 IMPACTS

Due to the impact of COVID-19, our holiday parks were closed and re-opened three times during 2020-21. This created extra work for our team as we issued refunds or changed numerous bookings for cabins and casual and seasonal campsites. We also monitored and provided fee relief to our Twelve-Month Permit (TMP) holders.

We are pleased that on every re-opening we have been able to respond quickly and welcome old friends and new faces to have a well-deserved break on the northern Bellarine.

Our team quickly adapted to the 'new normal' of COVID-19 and we retained all permanent holiday parks staff and some casual staff to support guests already onsite at the time of closures. The quiet time also allowed our staff to continue work behind the scenes and undertake some long-term maintenance to have the parks looking their best for the return of guests.

THE ONLINE GUEST EXPERIENCE

Our guest portal for Twelve-month Permit (TMP) holders has been implemented and already proven to significantly streamline the yearly permit process. TMP holders can now login anytime and review their documentation easily.

Our online booking system also moved ahead in leaps and bounds, now allowing prospective guests to search and book a range of campsites and cabins in the shoulder and off-peak season.

We have re-invigorated our email newsletter and developed a new template targeted specifically towards our holiday park guests. Currently reaching more than 900 subscribers, it provides the most up-to-date holiday park news and exclusive offers.

UPGRADES AND IMPROVEMENTS

Despite the impacts of COVID-19, we were able to undertake modest upgrades to holiday park facilities which will improve guest experience on return.

Portarlington Holiday Park 2020–21 initiatives included:

- Finalised the \$900,000 upgrade of the power supply network to replace the low voltage overhead supply with an underground high voltage supply.
- Upgraded the ensuite sites with synthetic lawn to replace the crushed gravel.
- Installed new outdoor tables on the deck of Arthur's Lounge and Camp Kitchen.
- Replaced the shade sail over the BBQ area near Arthur's Lounge and Camp Kitchen.
- Initiated rolling upgrades of signage and banners.
- Three washing machines and three dryers upgraded as part of the continuing replacement program.
- Cabin couches upgraded.
- Road repairs throughout the park to fix potholes and cracks.
- External painting of toilet blocks and camp kitchens.
- Annual turf maintenance and site landscaping.

Seasonal campground 2020–21 initiatives included:

- Campsite flooding prevention projects including kerbing in the top end of Batman Park and drainage pit installation at the lower end of Bengalat Reserve.
- External painting of the lower Batman Park toilet block.
- New turf for campsites at the top end of Batman Park.
- Tracks within all seasonal holiday parks have been renewed.
- Annual turf maintenance and site landscaping in all campgrounds.



Community connections

A diverse approach to engagement and communication with coastal users enables us to understand use of the coastal reserve and local values. We focus on positive relationships, building mutual trust and collaboration, allowing us to realise a high level of customer service and ensure sustainable and shared use of the coast.



CONSULTATION

Due to the impacts of COVID-19 many projects were placed on hold; however, we were able to activate the Indented Head master plan with initial consultation held during April-May 2021. This was done through a variety of methods including an online survey, an onsite information/consultation session and meetings with local community groups and partner agencies. Meetings were also held with two Crown land leaseholders to present elements of the project that had potential to directly impact their operations. As with all coastal infrastructure projects, we continually engage with Wadawurrung to ensure we are meeting their aspirations for Country.

COMMUNICATIONS

We regularly communicate about the work we do, the natural and cultural values of the coastal reserve, our holiday parks and our engagement activities through:

- Newsletters
- Social media
- Media releases
- Our website
- Monthly local newspaper columns
- Signage on the coastal reserve
- Annual Community Meeting

COVID-19 also created extra requirements to communicate Victorian Government advice and restrictions. We did so in a timely and responsive manner to provide the community and guests with up-to-date information on changes to our holiday park services or use of public infrastructure.

VOLUNTEERS

Our volunteers continue to be invaluable in assisting to achieve our on-ground conservation results throughout the year. Volunteers join us through established volunteer groups (the Friends of Pt Richards and BeachWatch) as well as at Bellarine Bayside hosted community environment days that connect the community with the local environment while providing outcomes that protect and enhance the coastal reserve.

In addition to our volunteer programs, we also receive volunteer support from Caring for our Bays, Birdlife Australia and the Victorian Coastal Monitoring Program.

Since 2011, local group Woofers and Walkers have organised an annual Clean Up Australia Day event in Portarlington. This year, 16 people joined in to help collect seven large bags of litter including hundreds of cigarette butts.

Friends of Pt Richards

The Friends of Pt Richards dedicated approximately 350 volunteer hours to removing invasive weeds and planting native vegetation (note: this number is lower than previous financial years due to COVID-19). The group were incredibly flexible and supportive throughout 2020-21 as their ability to get together was affected by public health directions. They joined us at short notice whenever government restrictions allowed and followed all COVIDSafe requirements.

The group diversified their volunteering, taking on their social media page in their spare time to grow awareness of the outcomes they achieve. They also use the page to share their knowledge of the Point Richards Flora and Fauna Reserve and any new discoveries they make during their weekly volunteering sessions.

BeachWatch

Most of our BeachWatch teams also paused due to COVID-19; however, between lockdowns they managed to undertake approximately 80 volunteer hours measuring sand profiles.



Corporate

We ensure good governance and aim for excellence in core business delivery and customer service by fostering and enhancing existing partnerships, investigating business growth opportunities and supporting tenant business to realise financial stability. We issue and manage leases, licences and permits to provide benefits to the public and ensure use of the coastal reserve is sustainable, equitable and safe.

STATEMENT OF EXPECTATIONS

The Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change issues a Statement of Expectations (SoE) to the Category 1 Coastal Committees of Management in the Barwon South West Region. The SoE issued in January 2018 and the update issued in August 2019 are applicable to the year ended 30 June 2021.

Bellarine Bayside's progress against the eleven priority expectations in the Statement of Expectations are detailed at page 4 in Appendix 1: Financial Report 2021.

IT MIGRATION

We finalised an upgrade of our IT systems which has ensured improved data security and workability. This included moving away from office-based server hardware and migrating to cloud-based systems. We also implemented multi-factor authentication, managed solutions and moved our website to a more efficient hosting platform.

This was particularly timely as the changes to our IT solutions allowed us to quickly adjust to working from home directives with no impact on efficiencies.

COVID-19 RESPONSE

The health and safety of our guests, staff and the public is of the highest importance to Bellarine Bayside. In response to COVID-19, we continually monitored and adhered to all government advice, rapidly adjusting our services and communicating changes. This is underpinned by an all-encompassing COVIDSafe Plan which formed the basis for all the measures we have implemented. We are proud to have an agile workforce and acknowledge their efforts to quickly adapt and ensure all our operations were COVIDSafe.



We found advantages to the new normal including the rapid uptake of online meeting platforms which not only allowed us to keep connected as a staff group, but also facilitated new ways to reach partner agencies and the community. We formed close working groups with neighbouring and nearby land managers, ensuring a common approach was taken to the management of public facilities and infrastructure.

This has fostered relationships beyond the scope of COVID-19 and we look forward to shared public land management strategies across the south-west region into the future.

Luckily, closures to our holiday parks as a result of COVID-19 occurred mostly during the off-peak season and the peak season, where we generate the majority of our revenue for the year, was minimally impacted. We also saw casual campsite and cabin bookings during some months of the shoulder and off-peak periods exceed forecasts, which we attribute to border closures and an uptake in intrastate travel.

OUR PEOPLE

Staff changes

Bruce Elliot commenced as Chief Executive Officer in early July 2020, bringing extensive experience in public sector executive leadership to Bellarine Bayside. Bruce has proved to be a positive leader, implementing a number of initiatives to achieve progressive and valuable outcomes, successfully navigating the challenges of 2020-21.

Paul McConachy was welcomed as the Holiday Parks Manager and took the challenge head-on, starting in late-December 2020 at the beginning of the peak season. Paul has a combined total of 25 years' experience in the leisure, tourism and entertainment industries and a strong background in safety management, strategic leadership, innovation and people management. He is passionate about the tourism industry and looking forward to working with us for the years to come.

We are thrilled to appoint our graduating Parks and Gardens Apprentice, Jesse, as a fulltime staff member, retaining his skills and expertise in the role of Senior Horticulturalist. Additionally, we appointed new staff into the vacated roles of Housekeeping Team Leader, Maintenance and Visitor Services Officer, as well as the newly created role of Holiday Parks Senior Customer Service Officer.

All our new staff members bring significant experience and skills that will allow us to continue and expand upon our commitment to deliver excellence in customer service and public land management.

Staff Training

Our staff have ensured they are up to date with the skills needed for the job, undertaking training in the areas of chainsaw operation (Trim and Cut Felled Trees), first aid, conflict resolution, Medium Rigid Licences, Front End Loader Operation and Agricultural Chemical User Permit.



Clean Up Australia Day

On 2 March, our team joined Parks Victoria for a joint Business Clean Up Day; while we scoured the foreshore in Portarlington, Parks Victoria scurried over the Portarlington Pier rock wall.

All up 11 bags of rubbish were collected and litter that was prevented from making its way into Port Phillip Bay included cigarette butts, disposable masks, take away food wrappers, fishing litter (line, hooks, bait bags), wipes and beach toys.

LEASES, LICENCES AND PERMITS

We manage 39 leases and licences issued to community clubs, commercial venues and private boat sheds, allowing activities, goods and services to be delivered to visitors and the local community alike (see Appendix 2: Summary of Leases and Licences). These make up a small portion of our revenue which is reinvested back into maintaining and improving coastal Crown land, public infrastructure and holiday park facilities.

Additionally, we issued 33 permits in 2020-21 for use of the coastal reserve to provide goods and services to the public, or private permits to conduct activities on the coastal reserve other than personal recreation.

COASTAL EVENTS

We permitted, sponsored and supported 25 coastal events this financial year including markets, sporting events and private events such as weddings. Events are an important contributor to the local community and economy, and they allow attendees an opportunity to connect with the coastal reserve.

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

Bellarine Bayside has completed another successful year and reports an operating surplus of \$817k, an increase of \$171k on the previous year (FY2020: \$646k).

FY2021 operations generated revenues of \$7.28m, an increase of \$532k or 8% on the previous year's revenues of \$6.75m. The holiday parks contributed \$6.47m or 89% of total revenues (FY2020: \$5.96m). The increase in holiday park revenues can be attributed to bookings during the FY2021 peak camping season being unaffected by COVID-19 restrictions. Grants and subsidies from State Government and other sources totalled \$642k, 9% of total revenues (FY2020: \$567k) and revenues from other sources – foreshore leases, licence fees, permits and investments – was \$170k, 2% of total revenues (FY2020: \$219k).

Total expenditure for the year (excluding depreciation charges) was \$5.28m (2020: \$4.95m). This was an increase of \$334k or 7% on the previous year. The increase in expenditure was largely attributable to increased cleaning regimes due to COVID-19 and an increase in repairs and maintenance.

Cash flows from operations for the year were \$3.66m (2020: \$833k). The increase is partly due to the decision to extend the due date for FY2021 TMP contracts to 31 July 2020. Traditionally contracts are required to be completed and returned by 30 June. Due to the uncertainties caused by COVID-19, permit holders in FY2021 were given an extension until 31 July 2020. The decision to extend the due date for FY2021 TMP contracts had no impact on revenue as the income is recognised as it is earned not when the cash is received.

The completion of the year's operations saw total cash and investments of \$7.39m held at 30 June 2021 compared to \$4.37m held at 30 June 2020, an increase of \$3.02m. The entity remains well placed to meet the funding demands of the new financial year.

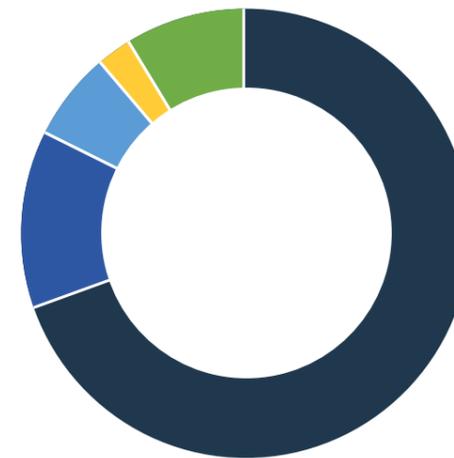
During the year, \$1m of funds was applied to project works (both operating and capital) a decrease of \$1m or 50% on the previous year (FY2020: \$2m). Funding came from a combination of grants and the strong operating result. Significant works and outcomes include upgrades to the Bellarine Coastal Trail \$128k, completion of the Indented Head Tennis and Basketball Facility \$113k and the upgrade of the Point Richards car park \$349k.

COVID-19 Impact

COVID-19 caused a global pandemic, which impacted Australia from March 2020. Significant government restrictions were imposed to assist in stopping the spread of the disease, and these restrictions are still in place at the time of writing this report. These restrictions have had, and may continue to have, a significant impact on revenues. Bellarine Bayside has received cashflow boosts from the government but has not received any other financial assistance. Bellarine Bayside's role in maintaining parks and the coastline of the northern Bellarine Peninsula has meant that close to normal expenditure has remained.

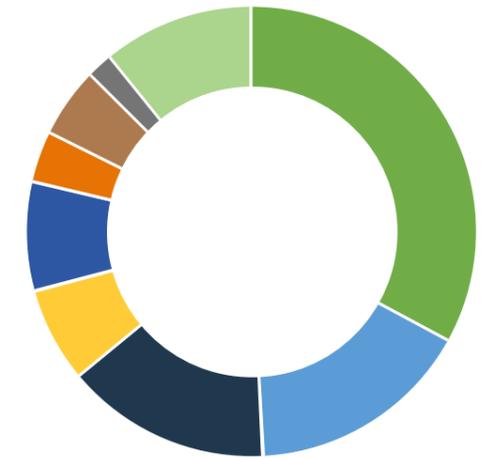
Please find our full financial statements in Appendix 1: Financial Report 2020-21 on: www.bellarinebayside.com.au

Revenues 2020 - 2021 - % of total \$7,283,285



- Portarlington Holiday Park: 70%
- Indented Head Holiday Park: 13%
- St Leonards Holiday Park: 6%
- Foreshore Reserves & Assets: 2%
- Grants: 9%

2020 - 2021 Revenue Distribution % of total \$7,283,285



- Staff employment costs: 33%
- Depreciation: 16%
- Repairs & maintenance: 15%
- Electricity, gas, water: 7%
- Coastal management (admin): 8%
- Waste, garbage: 4%
- Cleaning: 5%
- Motor vehicle operating: 1%
- Asset replacement funds: 11%

Capital, Renewals & Project Activity





Bellarine Bayside

Coastal Management

Bellarine Bayside Foreshore Committee of Management Incorporated

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