



**Bellarine
Bayside**
Coastal Management

Bellarine Bayside Foreshore
Committee of Management

ANNUAL REPORT 2021-22



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 responsible for the Environment (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 and programs that:

- protect cultural heritage;
- focus on meeting the highest environmental management and 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 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 124,000 visitor nights annually. Situated in absolute beachfront locations, our holiday parks offer a range of accommodation options to more than 20,000 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 through robust planning and 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.

Chair and CEO's Report

The 2021-22 financial year has seen Bellarine Bayside recover strongly from the impacts of COVID-19. We are proud to be reporting on this year's achievements as we continue to work towards achieving our vision and objectives for the coastal Crown land of the northern Bellarine Peninsula.

While COVID-19 related interruptions continued into 2021-22, lockdowns had ceased by the beginning of the summer peak period. With no interruptions through peak camping periods, combined with increased booking outside of these times, the COVID-19 impact on revenue from our holiday park operations was the lowest since the pandemic began. This resulted in strong operating revenue, which provided us the opportunity to re-activate a number of projects that were put on hold during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

COVID-19 impacted in other ways, not always obvious. We cannot emphasise highly enough that the professionalism, resilience and contributions of our staff were key to our success in 2021-22. In particular, we recognise and commend their phenomenal efforts at the height of the summer camping period in January 2022 when COVID-19 had a profound impact on our workforce. Our close-knit staff group rallied around and supported each other and the organisation to ensure our holiday park patrons, coastal visitors and local community continued to receive a high level of service and enjoy our coast.

COVID-19 wasn't the only challenge in 2021-22. Severe weather lashed Victoria in October 2021 requiring extensive clean-up and make-safe works in the weeks following. While these storms had lesser impact on our coastline compared to other parts of the State, significant responsive and unplanned tree works and erosion repairs were completed as a result. Fortunately, there was no impact to our holiday park operations and our seasonal campgrounds opened on schedule.

A highlight for 2021-22 was the implementation of some long-standing actions from the Camping and Accommodation Strategy, which was approved in 2017. For the first time in more than 10 years we established new twelve-month permit (TMP) sites in our holiday park at Portarlinton and began offering them to our TMP waiting list in May. As well, we sought to enhance guest experience through improving online bookings and payments, installing a new exit gate at the western end of

the holiday park in Portarlinton, and progressing a range of rolling improvements throughout park facilities. With the assistance of funding from the State Government, we also introduced three new Beach Pod units in Portarlinton as an accommodation option trial. If this trial is successful, we will look to introduce more roofed accommodation in the future to expand accommodation offerings.

Grants and subsidies, primarily from the State Government, increased by over 100% on pre-COVID levels. These significant contributions, totalling \$1.77 million, allowed several large projects to occur on the coastal reserve that could not have otherwise. A major component of this was Better Boating Victoria's contribution for significant upgrades to the Point Richards boating facility. Other funded projects included improvements to the Bellarine Coastal Trail and replacement of high energy use lighting with LED lighting throughout the holiday parks and coastal reserve.

We continued to build on our commitment to reduce our environmental footprint and embed sustainability at the core of our activities, supported by a strong desire from the Committee to improve sustainability of operations. Option investigation has begun into green power, introduction of solar and reduction of water use. In addition to the LED replacement program, we worked towards improved energy and water efficiency through the installation of power use and water monitoring devices, improved water use educational signage and initiation of our hydration station program.

This financial year saw Committee members continue to provide clear strategic guidance. Excitingly, the Northern Bellarine Coastal and Marine Management Plan (the CMMP) was approved by the Minister in December and is awaiting gazettal. The CMMP, as a consequence of extensive community consultation, reflects the aspirations and needs of our local communities, patrons and foreshore users, and will continue to be delivered in consultation with them. The CMMP provides overarching guidance to our operations and is delivered through our corporate plan, which is updated each year and adds organisational capacity actions to those from the CMMP to produce the annual work program. In 2021-22, Committee discussion throughout the year focussed strongly on challenges and opportunities to the end of this decade, and how best to position Bellarine Bayside for the future.

Looking ahead, we have an exciting year coming up with further large projects planned. We will continue to work towards goals and actions of our major strategies and plans, including the Camping and Accommodation Strategy through refurbishments of select holiday park amenities, including major upgrades to Batman Park amenity buildings.

We will continue our major programs to protect and enhance natural environments, including the installation of boardwalks in the Indented Head Coastal Saltmarsh. Through managing ongoing access concerns, this project will both protect the natural values of this sensitive environment and improve accessibility for the community, a desired outcome that will begin to shape our works into the future. We will also continue to consider sustainability improvements and implement our new sustainability policies to ensure it is front of mind in all works we undertake.

We would like to acknowledge that this year would not have been possible without the support of our partner organisations, the Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation, Better Boating Victoria, Parks Victoria, the City of Greater Geelong, and the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP), along with continued support from the Member for Bellarine. We extend our gratitude to their staff, with whom we have formed strong working relationships to support and extend upon the work we do to manage our coastal Crown land reserve on behalf of the Victorian community and the Minister.

We appreciate the valuable input and feedback provided by community members and visitors throughout the year and we will continue to nurture our relationships in these areas.

Finally, a huge thank you to our dedicated staff, volunteers and Committee members. Each one of our team demonstrates significant commitment to Bellarine Bayside, and our work would not be possible without their individual strengths and passions as they work together to preserve and enhance the coast and our facilities.



MELANIE ROGERS
BELLARINE BAYSIDE CHAIR



BRUCE ELLIOT
BELLARINE BAYSIDE CEO

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

In 2021/22 the Bellarine Bayside Committee consisted of ten Committee members:

Melanie Rogers
Chair

John Hartigan
Deputy Chair

Dr Sandra Brizga

Helene Cameron

Richard Davies

Dr Kenneth Latta PSM

Gregory Lewis

Nicole Newman

Cameron Quinten

Sheena Walters

SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM

Bruce Elliot
Chief Executive Officer

Justin Smith
Planning and Environment Manager

David Goldie
Operations Manager

Wayne Coots
Finance and Business Manager

Paul McConachy
Holiday Parks Manager

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

Caring for our coast

ABOUT US

27 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



\$8.96 million*

reinvested into the coastal reserve (\$3m of funds was applied to project works, an increase of \$2m on the previous year)

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 **3** Beach Pods

124,000+ visitor nights provided accommodation for

20,000+ visitors to the northern Bellarine Peninsula

who added approximately **\$15 million** to the local economy

5 large/group accommodation bookings

PUBLIC ACCESS, FACILITIES AN INFRASTRUCTURE

More than **1300 hours** spent mowing maintaining



57,600,000

square metre (5760 hectares) of turf

410 Bins Emptied approximately **35,000 times**

27 amenity blocks (public and holiday park) cleaned **5,000 times**

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

20 public BBQs

190 picnic tables

5 Boat ramps



COASTAL ENVIRONMENT

OVER 8,600

native trees, shrubs and grasses and groundcovers planted



550 hours of pest animal management

More than **2100 hours** of weed control including mulching, brush cutting, hand weeding and spraying.

Facilitated more than **1060** volunteer hours on the coastal reserve through our volunteer groups, community planting days and the support of external organisations



19 activities were run throughout the year engaging more than **250** people in environmental and cultural activities

Supported more than **550** student learning hours through student placements with our Coastal Conservation crew

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Key consultation topics:

- Indented Head master plan

Key media topics:

- Volunteer efforts on the coast
- Bellarine Coastal Trail improvements
- Vegetation management

57 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, trees, boat ramps and erosion

6088 Facebook followers

1656 Insta followers

101 LinkedIn followers



EVENTS AND PERMITS

23 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

19 foreshore permits for private use of the coastal reserve

2 foreshore weddings



Planning

We work collaboratively with Traditional Owners, government departments, partner organisations, key stakeholders and industry experts to deliver projects and programs that:

- protect cultural heritage;
- focus on meeting the highest environmental management and 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 received approval pursuant to the *Marine and Coastal Act 2018* from the Minister and is awaiting gazettal. Although it is yet to be gazetted, initiatives detailed within the CMMP are being implemented and it is currently guiding works along the northern Bellarine coastal reserve.



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 2021-22. 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 the recent storms. The second is beach renourishment works, which build up the beach and provide a buffer against erosion.

In 2021-22, DELWP continued 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.

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

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 2021-22, we developed sustainability policies to guide our work and embed sustainability into all our core business functions, fostering a sustainable Bellarine Bayside. These policies cover a broad range of topics including water, waste and energy management, supplier selection criteria and equipment procurement.

We began implementing energy efficiency strategies, replacing high energy use lighting (such as metal halides, incandescent and fluorescent) throughout the holiday parks and coastal reserve with low energy and low heat LED lighting. Power use monitoring has also been installed throughout to assist in identifying areas for improvement. These upgrades were supported by the Victorian Government through the Business Recovery Energy Efficiency Fund. Additionally, in partnership with DELWP through their Solar on Public Buildings Program, solar systems were installed at the Indented Head Community Hall and Bengalat camper amenities.

Continuing our Coastal Partnership Program with Barwon Water and funded through their Water Efficiency Project, we continued installing water use educational signage and water monitoring devices throughout the holiday parks and public coastal facilities. The latter of these has enabled leak detection and we have repaired a handful of significant leaks. The monitors will also provide data on the effectiveness of future water reduction programs.

These projects will not only reduce power and water consumption, in turn reducing our carbon footprint, but will also realise savings in reduced service costs.

Our self-funded hydration station program commenced with the installation of a chilled, filtered water station outside the main camp kitchen at our holiday park at Portarlington. This was supplemented by the removal of single use plastic water bottles for sale in holiday parks and the provision of high-quality, double-walled, stainless steel water bottles for purchase to encourage the use of reusables amongst our community.



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 Wrathall Reserve and two St Leonards sites.
- Seawall replacement projects at Bengalat and St Leonards Yacht Club.
- Victorian Coastal Monitoring Program.

Better Boating Victoria

- Point Richards boating facility carpark 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.

INDENTED HEAD MASTER PLAN

In 2021-22, we continued development of a master plan for approximately 3.5 hectares of coastal Crown land at Indented Head. The master plan aims to address previously raised coastal management issues and user aspirations, while ensuring cultural values are protected and sufficient area is set aside for conservation and rehabilitation of the natural coastal and marine environment.

The objectives of the Indented Head Master Plan are identified as providing strategic direction for the area with a 10-to-15-year horizon and providing a high-level landscaping and concept design for the area. This includes some placemaking of facilities projects such as Batman Park campground amenity block, camp kitchen, public toilets and the Bellarine Coastal Trail.

The 2nd stage of consultation was held during January-February 2022 and included the release of the draft master plan for the community to view and make comment. This stage focussed on any issues, the proposed locations of infrastructure and landscaping, and any further refinements necessary to improve the master plan design.

Development and implementation of the plan will continue into the 2022-23 financial year.

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.



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 2021-22, our partnership with WTOAC included obtaining Cultural Heritage Permits and Cultural Heritage Management Plans for discrete works on the coast, undertaking staff and contractor cultural heritage inductions and training, and providing community cultural education programs. We also held regular meetings with WTOAC representatives about specific infrastructure projects and day-to-day works to progress our ability to better protect and manage cultural heritage on the coastal reserve.

To continue recognising and celebrating Wadawurrung Cultural values on the coastal reserve, we engaged with WTOAC to name two reserves within our management area that currently don't have official names. They have put forward meaningful name options that reflect both past and present uses of the two areas. We will progress this project in 2022-23, seeking to formalise names through the naming rules for places in Victoria process.



ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION AND HABITAT PROTECTION

Conserving and restoring native flora and fauna habitat on the coastal reserve is critical to preserve the natural values for future generations. Through continuing our native vegetation restoration program along the primary dune, we are improving habitat connectivity along the coast which supports natural processes such as dispersal of flora and movement of wildlife to find resources and opportunities to breed. Restoration of the coastal vegetation also creates a buffer at the top of the beach and is our first approach to mitigate the impacts of natural coastal processes and erosion, making dunes less vulnerable to both wind and wave erosion without impacting natural coastal processes.



In 2021-22, we continued to manage targeted areas of primary dune to ensure weeds are controlled and native vegetation is enhanced. In addition, we focussed on improving key habitat areas such as Point Richards Flora and Fauna Reserve, Lower Bluff Reserve and the Indented Head Coastal Saltmarsh. This year, we undertook significant weed control at the latter with support from the Victorian Government through the Port Phillip Bay Fund. This was followed up with planting indigenous seedlings, including hairy spinifex, which will hold the sand, enhance red-capped plover habitat and protect the regionally endangered Coastal Saltmarsh.

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. 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.

In 2021-22, we built upon the successes of our integrated rabbit control regime by continuing to undertake management activities within Point Richards Flora and Fauna Reserve and expanding targeted management into the adjacent holiday park in Portarlington. We continued to undertake before and after surveys to evaluate the effectiveness of chosen control methods, and within the Point Richards Flora and Fauna Reserve there was more than 50% reduction in rabbit activity.

We also initiated fox control activities within Point Richards Flora and Fauna Reserve where foxes pose a significant risk to native wildlife and contribute to the spread of weeds. Surveys for dens, remote monitoring cameras and reliable community reports were used to map activity in the reserve, and targeted control methods selected based on the use of the reserve and time of year.



EDUCATION FOR CONSERVATION

Nurturing an appreciation for the marine and coastal environments encourages community support for its protection and is fundamental to achieve our ongoing coastal conservation goals and objectives. We deliver fun and accessible activities through our Bayside Alive! program to inspire awareness and respect of cultural heritage and the natural coastal environment.

Bellarine Nature Cadets

Bellarine Nature Cadets began in 2017 to provide families with opportunities to learn about the coastal environment of the northern Bellarine Peninsula. It is well documented that participating in nature-based education activities improves children's affinity and empathy for the natural environment, resulting in kids who are more likely to care for the natural world when they are older. The program delivers fun, place-based and hands-on activities on the coast, allowing kids to explore and connect with the natural world.

In 2021-22 we engaged 31 individuals in six sessions of the autumn Bellarine Nature Cadets program. We thank the facilitators who assisted us; the Victorian Fisheries Authority, Birdlife Australia, Bellarine Catchment Network, the Friends of Point Richards Flora and Fauna Reserve, Parks Victoria and Mr Mussel. Through these sessions the cadets learnt about fauna species that live on our beaches, identifying native plants, the local aquaculture industry and explored how humans and the coastal environment can better co-exist.

Community Education Activities

We delivered 13 community education sessions to more than 220 campers and local residents. The sessions covered a range of topics including a nest box making workshop, beachcombing, guided bushwalks, shorebird discovery and art in nature. Sessions also delivered Cultural awareness information in partnership with WTOAC. Participants learnt about Wadawurrung People on the Bellarine including bush foods and traditional use of native plants, Wadawurrung dance, language and symbols, along with the opportunity to paint with ochre.



Schools

Students from Grades 4-6 at Portarlington Primary School joined us for a day to explore the biodiversity in Point Richards Flora and Fauna Reserve, supporting their term focus on ecosystems. Together we discovered terrestrial, wetland and tree canopy ecosystems, and learnt about human influences on the natural environment. This excursion was supported by the Victorian Government through the 2021 Community Volunteer Action Grants program, and facilitation was assisted by the Bellarine Catchment Network.

The outdoor education class of Flinders College Carrum Downs Campus enjoyed a guided bushwalk of Point Richards Flora and Fauna Reserve and a practical demonstration of our BeachWatch program. Both activities introduced the students to our organisational responsibilities as a coastal Crown land manager and environmental management techniques.



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.

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.

Significant upgrades were initiated in Portarlington where aggregate concrete was laid on part of one of the most highly utilised sections of the Bellarine Coastal Trail. The concreting will improve accessibility and safety for trail users, and result in a significant reduction in seasonal wear and tear, thus reducing maintenance requirements. Finalisation of the works will occur in 2022-23 and will also include introduction of outdoor showers and a drinking fountain to the picnic area near the Portarlington Harbour. These upgrades are funded by the Victorian Government through the Coastal Public Access and Risk Grants program.

The last section of the Bellarine Coastal Trail to be formalised was completed in September. Following previous engagement and option investigation, a proposed trail alignment for the incomplete section near the Indented Head Community Hall was put forward during consultation on the Indented Head Master Plan. It received majority support (77%) from survey respondents and was endorsed by the Indented Head Yacht Club and Indented Head Boat Club, both of which have facilities adjacent to the trail. The resulting alignment provides a direct, cost-effective and accessible route, considering the safety of trail users and both clubs' operations and activities.



POINT RICHARDS BOATING FACILITY UPGRADES

We continued to work closely with Better Boating Victoria on upgrades to boating facilities managed by Bellarine Bayside. The first stage, involving expansion of the Point Richards car and boat trailer parking facility and improvements to traffic flow around the facility, was completed in 2021-22. This stage has resulted in a total of 83 car and trailer parks and 14 new single car spaces through formalisation of the existing overflow parking area. A roundabout has also been added to assist in the management of traffic in the carpark and ramp precinct.

The second stage of works, also involving the Point Richards boating facility, began in May 2022 following a lengthy design period that included community consultation, a coastal processes study and extensive modelling to determine any impacts. These works will improve vessel access and egress at the facility through construction of a new groyne to deflect seagrass and sand from entering the harbour.

These works are thanks to a State Government investment via Better Boating Victoria to deliver upgrades to boat ramps that have been determined as priority recreational boating facilities requiring improvement.

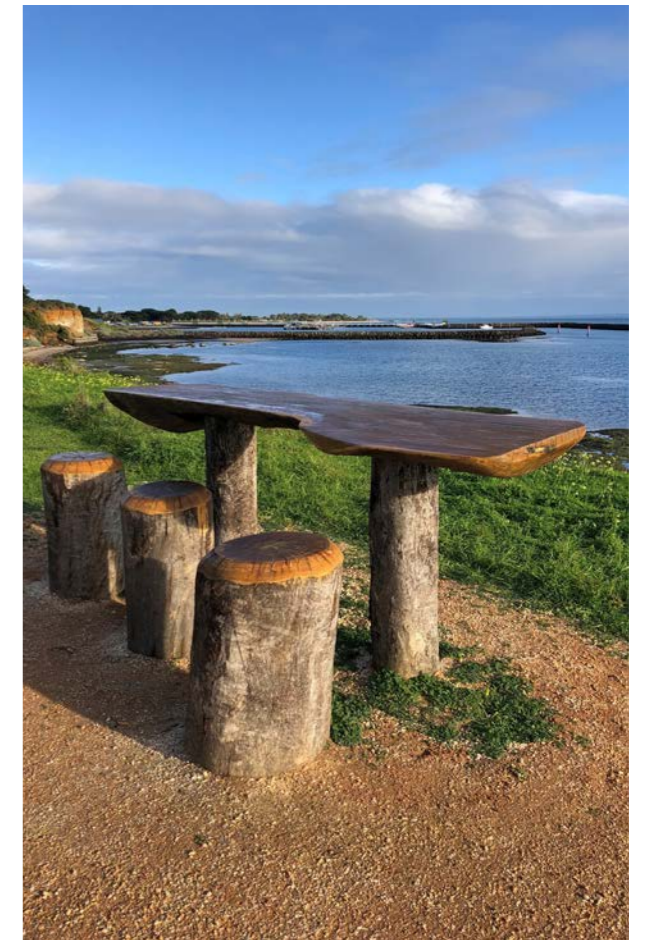
INFRASTRUCTURE AND FACILITIES

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 Bellarine 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 2021-22, 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 2022-23) include:

- Finalised construction of a \$1 million car/trailer parking upgrade at Point Richards and commenced \$1.5 million of upgrades to marine-side infrastructure in partnership with Better Boating Victoria.
- Initiated renewals to St Leonards boat ramp jetty (public consultation) in partnership with Better Boating Victoria.
- Commenced a program to renew the rubbish bin surrounds.
- Replacement of many rotted and non-compliant outdoor picnic settings.
- Timber repairs to St Leonards and Indented Head boat ramp jetties.
- Sanding and resealing of the Indented Head Community Hall entrance way.
- Significant and very successful beach renourishment works in partnership with DEWLP using 28,000m³ of sand at two St Leonards locations.



Holiday parks management

We operate six holiday parks and camping reserves in Portarlington, Indented Head and St Leonards, facilitating over 124,000 visitor nights annually. Situated in absolute beachfront locations, our holiday parks offer a range of accommodation options to more than 20,000 guests each year who contribute significantly to the region's economy.

BEACH PODS

A major highlight of the 2021-22 year was the introduction of three accommodation 'pods' to our holiday park at Portarlington. Located right on the beachfront, the Beach Pods have created quite a buzz among guests and passers-by. Since being available for bookings from the end of April, the uptake has been consistently strong with the Beach Pods booked out most weekends until end of June.

Through improving our accommodation options and off-season offerings the Beach Pods will increase our revenue and allow us to reinvest further funds into improvements in the holiday parks. It is also anticipated that the Beach Pods will contribute to the wider regional tourism market by providing a unique, high-quality accommodation option to attract a different customer base and at different times of the year.

Subject to a successful trial of these three pods, a further seven pods will be considered for installation to deliver on the total allocated number (10) of roofed accommodations suggested in Bellarine Bayside's Camping and Accommodation Strategy.

This project was supported by the Victorian Government through the Camping and Caravan Grants project.



TWELVE-MONTH PERMIT SITE INFILL

We expanded our twelve-month permit (TMP) sites within our holiday park in Portarlington and allocated them in line with our existing TMP waiting list. The introduction of additional TMP sites will improve equity of access to coastal Crown land (as per legislative requirements) and help meet the high demand for TMP sites. As per our Camping and Accommodation Strategy, the additional incoming funds from these new sites will be reinvested across the Crown land reserve (including all holiday parks), particularly to replace ageing infrastructure.

The location of the new TMP sites consists of in-filling several vacant sites and using land that is currently not allocated for any other use which allowed for ease of connection of utilities and will have minimal impact on cultural and environmental values. In total, 28 new TMP sites were created with no reduction in existing holiday park amenities or recreational open spaces.



RAMP ROAD EXIT GATE

Being almost 2 kilometres long and with only one main entry/exit point for guest vehicles, for many years our holiday park in Portarlington has been subject to significant traffic congestion along Fourth Avenue, the one road that traverses the entire length of the park. Along with being frustrating for guests, these circumstances created unnecessary safety concerns given that Fourth Avenue passes many campsites, open recreation areas, our food vendor area and children's play spaces.

During the 2021-22 year we redeveloped an existing staff only access point at the western end of the holiday park to be an exit gate for guests. Since the new exit gate has been operational, we have seen a significant reduction in traffic along Fourth Avenue and improved traffic flow around the park. We are pleased to have improved the safety and experience of our customers as we strive to create a safe environment for the enjoyment of all.



UPGRADES AND IMPROVEMENTS

Portarlington Holiday Park 2021-22 initiatives included:

- Finalised further upgrades of power supply within the holiday park at Portarlington.
- Installed recycled synthetic grass base to the 16 ensuite sites providing an improved guest experience.
- Road repairs throughout the park to fix potholes and cracks.
- External painting of toilet blocks and camp kitchens.
- Annual turf maintenance and site landscaping.
- Our afterhours emergency service (1800 222 778) commenced July 1, 2021, reducing the volume of incoming calls which serves several purposes:
 1. Streamlines calls, allowing for improved guest service.
 2. No longer places an individual team member in a compromising position where safety is threatened.
 3. Alleviates nuisance calls interrupting sleep patterns for those rostered to work the next day.
 4. Reduces costs with unnecessary call outs.
- Website improvement with 'Things to Do' section added supporting and promoting local establishments.

Seasonal campground 2021-22 initiatives included:

- Campsite flooding prevention projects for all coastal camping reserves.
- Internal painting of all amenity blocks.
- Antiquated and outdated signage removed.
- Planning and design commenced for Batman Park amenity buildings.
- Tracks within all seasonal holiday parks have been renewed with speed hump added to Taylor Reserve to assist with shared path / coastal trail at the park entry point.
- Annual turf maintenance and site landscaping.

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

The 2nd stage of consultation on the Indented Head Master Plan, held during January-February 2022, was a major community engagement activity for us involving the release of the Draft Master Plan for people to view and make comment on via an online survey. It also included meeting again with the two Crown land leaseholders within the Master Plan 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.

Another major activity was the release of our inaugural Biennial Community Survey in June 2022. Through formalising a biennial community survey, we are seeking to gain insight into current community views about the northern Bellarine coast, ensure we are meeting our responsibilities under legislation, as well as identify shifts in expectations and opportunities for improvement

Throughout the year we undertook targeted consultation for a range of smaller projects, and we implemented our Community Engagement Charter. Our charter builds on that of DELWP, providing tailored information on how and when we will engage, and what to expect.

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 and website.
- Media releases.
- Monthly local newspaper columns.
- Signage on the coastal reserve.
- Meetings and liaison with the community, including facilitating a yearly meeting with Committee members of Bellarine Bayside present.



VOLUNTEERS

Whether for half a day or many hours per year, each individual contribution that volunteers make is invaluable to help protect and enhance the local coastal environment on the northern Bellarine Peninsula. We are grateful for the support of all volunteers who join us through both our established volunteer groups (the Friends of Point Richards Flora and Fauna Reserve and BeachWatch) and at Bellarine Bayside hosted community environment days.

In addition to our volunteer programs, we also receive volunteer support from Caring for our Bays, Birdlife Australia, Bellarine Landcare Group, St Leonards Men's Shed 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, 22 people joined in to help collect 11 large bags of landfill and three bags of recyclables, plus some larger hard waste.

In a first for Bellarine Bayside, we were joined in November by employees of the Melbourne branch of Vysus Group for our first corporate volunteer day! The day was part of a coordinated global volunteering effort by Vysus Group to celebrate their one-year anniversary and the enthusiastic team assisted our Conservation Crew to remove weeds and collect native seeds from various locations along the coastal reserve. The day was a resounding success and we look forward to welcoming more business volunteer groups in the future!

Friends of Point Richards Flora and Fauna Reserve

The Friends of Point Richards Flora and Fauna Reserve have been actively restoring the Point Richards Flora and Fauna Reserve for more than 20 years. In 2021-22 they dedicated approximately 420 volunteer hours to undertake a variety of conservation activities in the Flora and Fauna Reserve. The group also joined our staff at community planting days, guided nature walks and a Bellarine Nature Cadets session, sharing their knowledge and passion, and inspiring others to act.

Supported by the Victorian Government through the 2021 Community Volunteer Actions Grants, the group created postcards and a 2022 calendar featuring stunning images of flora, fauna and landscapes within the Point Richards Flora and Fauna Reserve. These promotional materials aimed to share the values of the flora and fauna reserve more widely and expand membership of the Friends Group.

BeachWatch

Our BeachWatch teams began to reinvigorate and gathered valuable data when not constrained by government restrictions. In 2021-22 they undertook around 210 volunteer hours measuring losses and gains in sand over time and marker points. The data gathered is entered into our monitoring program to improve our capacity to make informed, adaptive and effective management decisions in relation to our coastline through a better understanding of if, when and how our coastal environment changes as a result of coastal processes.

Community Planting Days

In 2021-22 we were able to return to hosting all our regular community planting days along the coast. Over three planting days, 27 people joined us and helped to plant more than 1300 indigenous trees, grasses, shrubs and groundcovers.



STUDENT PLACEMENTS

Gordon TAFE

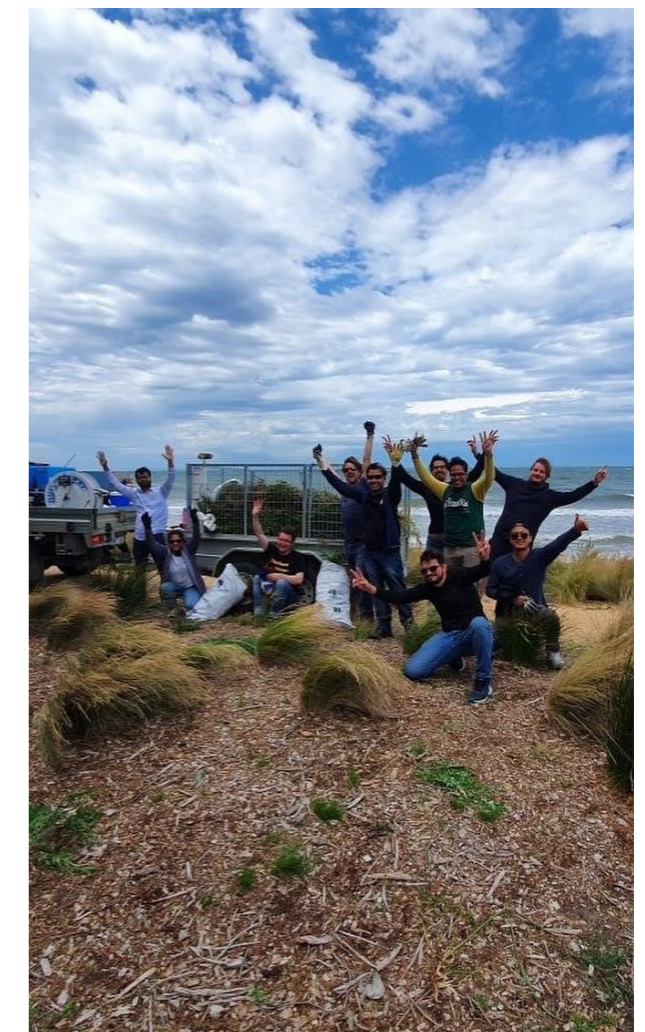
- 10 students from the Conservation and Ecosystem Management course at the Gordon TAFE undertook around 250 hours of student placement.

Deakin University

- In 2021-22 we entered into a signed agreement to be ongoing placement provider.
- Three students from Deakin University undertook 260 hours of student placement.
- One of the students has continued to join and support our Conservation Crew as a volunteer when possible between study and other commitments.

Work Experience

- One student undertook their High School work experience placement with us, providing 40 hours of support to our Conservation Crew.



Corporate

We ensure good governance and aim for excellence in core business delivery and customer service through robust planning and 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 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 2022.

Bellarine Bayside's progress against the eleven priority expectations in the Statement of Expectations are detailed at page 3 in Appendix 1: Financial Report 2021.

COASTAL EVENTS AND VENDORS

We permitted, sponsored and supported 23 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.

The 2021-22 year saw the much-anticipated return of the National Celtic Folk Festival. Being on hiatus for two years due to COVID-19 restrictions, the festival organisers put in a lot of hard work behind the scenes to deliver a sensational line up of music, dancing, kids activities, highland games demonstrations, food and drinks, market stalls, and more!

Additionally, we issued 23 permits in 2021-22 to vendors and activity service providers for use of the coastal reserve. These permits all aim to enhance the public experience on the coastal reserve and range from food vendors to fitness classes and guided tours.

One of the biggest commercial permits we issued in the 2021-22 was to the Piano Bar who brought their mobile experience, Piano Bar Shipped, to the coast for the first time. Situated in Portarlington for four weeks, they offered a range of entertainment to locals and visitors alike, including evening concerts, drag queen shows and family-friendly day events. The venue received glowing reviews from those who attended and was considered a great addition to the coast over summer!



We also issue private permits to individuals and organisations to conduct activities on the coastal reserve other than personal recreation. In 2021-22 we issued 19 such permits to school activities, private parties, professional photographers and more.

ONGOING IMPACTS OF COVID-19

Despite reduced Government mandated closures to our holiday parks, public facilities, open spaces and beaches, we continued to feel the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic during 2021-22. Like most businesses, these impacts were predominantly felt during January with the first Omicron wave which resulted in a number of our staff requiring to isolate during our peak season. While the consequences were noticeable to our workforce, we are proud that the outward impact was minimal and we attribute this success to the professionalism of our staff and their willingness to step up and help their colleagues.

A robust COVIDSafe Plan with pre-planned contingency measures continued to underpin our COVID-19 response. Due to our sound COVIDSafe measures we are pleased to report that there were no cases of COVID-19 transmission from staff to staff, or from staff to patron.

OUR PEOPLE

Staff changes

We undertook a review of staff structure in some areas, resulting in a restructure to our Holiday Parks and Operations areas. As a result, we have:

- Created a dedicated asset management function with two new full-time roles – Asset Services Coordinator and Asset Services Maintenance Officer; and
- Added one new full-time Maintenance and Visitor Services Officer (entry-level) role to our holiday parks staff base.

We also appointed a new Parks and Gardens apprentice.

All our new and existing 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 Development

We maintain a training matrix to ensure our staff are up to date with the skills, tickets and licences needed for the job. Staff regularly undertake training in the areas of Provide First Aid and CPR refresher, Medium Rigid Licences, Manual Handling, Front End Loader Operation, Traffic Management, Agricultural Chemical User Permit, and HSR (Health and Safety Representative). We also encourage employees to discuss development opportunities during their bi-annual performance reviews, which may include training requests. This has resulted in additional training being undertaken

such as the use of QGIS and Brightly Asset Management software, and Native Title and Aboriginal Heritage through the Public Land Consultancy.

All staff were encouraged to join a Cultural Awareness Training session, facilitated by Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation in May 2022. The training provided a good overview of recognising, acknowledging, supporting and identifying Cultural Values, both at a local level and more broadly.

Additionally, staff were supported to attend conferences including the Coast to Coast and Illuminate 2022 (the Brightly user conference).

Clean Up Australia Day

On 1 March, our team again joined Parks Victoria for a joint Business Clean Up Day along the coast, harbour and pier in Portarlington. In total, 16 people collected 12 bags full of litter, helping to protect Port Phillip Bay and the surrounding coastal areas.

People Matters Survey

We participated for the third year running in the People Matter Survey, which is the Victorian public sector's independent employee opinion survey. Conducted from 6 June – 1 July 2022, the People Matter Survey provides a safe and anonymous way for staff to have their say on their experience of different aspects of our workplace. We encourage all staff to take the survey as it helps shape important decisions within Bellarine Bayside to improve our workplace and culture.

Encouragingly, the results from 2021-22 show:

- Strong employee satisfaction and engagement.
- That we foster a highly inclusive workplace culture.
- Our staff rated that they feel there are high levels of support, responsiveness, accountability and integrity in the workplace.

The results also show there is room for improvement in a number of areas, including learning and development, collaboration, and career progression. Some of these aspects are difficult to amend in small organisations such as Bellarine Bayside (for example, career progression); however, we acknowledge the feedback from our staff and in the coming year we will continue to identify opportunities to support employee personal development and explore ways to better share information across workgroups.

LEASES AND LICENCES

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 that is reinvested back into maintaining and improving coastal Crown land, public infrastructure and holiday park facilities.

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

Bellarine Bayside has completed another successful year and reports an operating surplus of \$1.74m, an increase of \$924k on the previous year (FY2021: \$817k).

FY2022 operations generated revenues of \$8.96m, an increase of \$1.68m or 23% on the previous year's revenues of \$7.28m. The holiday parks contributed \$7.06m or 79% of total revenues (FY2021: \$6.47m). The increase in holiday park revenues can be attributed to increased bookings for cabins, season tickets and site sales during the FY2022 camping season. COVID-19 restrictions in FY2022 also had less of an impact on Twelve Month Permit holders than in the FY2021. Grants and subsidies from State Government and other sources totalled \$1.77m, 20% of total revenues (FY2021: \$642k) and revenues from other sources – foreshore leases, licence fees, permits and investments – was \$129k, 1% of total revenues (FY2021: \$170k).

Significant Grants in FY2022 included:

- \$630K from Better Boating Victoria towards the Point Richards car park upgrade.
- \$569k from Better Boating Victoria towards the Point Richards boating facility rock groyne.
- \$185k from DELWP towards the LED lighting project.
- \$104k from DELWP towards Bellarine Coastal Trail upgrades project.
- \$93k from DELWP towards Portarlington Holiday Park beach pod project.

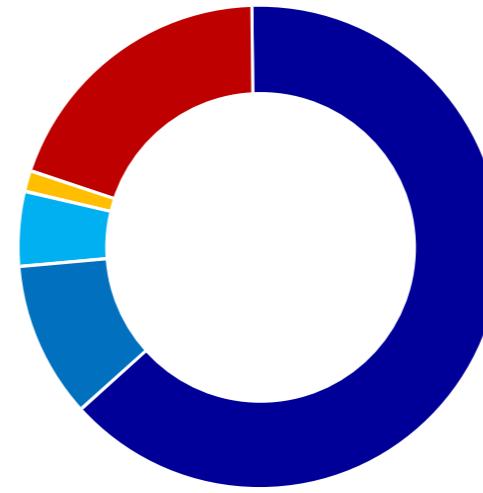
Operational expenditure for the year (excluding depreciation charges) was \$6.02m (2021: \$5.28m). This was an increase of \$738k or 14% on the previous year. The increase in expenditure was largely attributable to increased cleaning regimes due to COVID-19, an increase in repairs and maintenance and an increase in salaries, wages and associated staffing costs.

Cash flows from operations for the year were \$3.49m (2021: \$3.66m). The completion of the year's operations saw total cash and investments of \$8.5m held at 30 June 2022 compared to \$7.39m held at 30 June 2021, an increase of \$1.11m. The entity remains well placed to meet the funding demands of the new financial year.

During the year, \$3m of funds was applied to project works (both operating and capital) an increase of \$2m on the previous year (FY2021: \$1m). Funding came from a combination of grants and the strong operating result. Significant works and outcomes include upgrades to the Point Richards carpark \$977k, ongoing works on the Point Richards boating facility rock groyne \$569k (to be completed in FY2023), completion of a new exit gate at Portarlington Holiday Park \$276k and completion of three beach pod accommodation units at Portarlington Holiday Park \$240k.

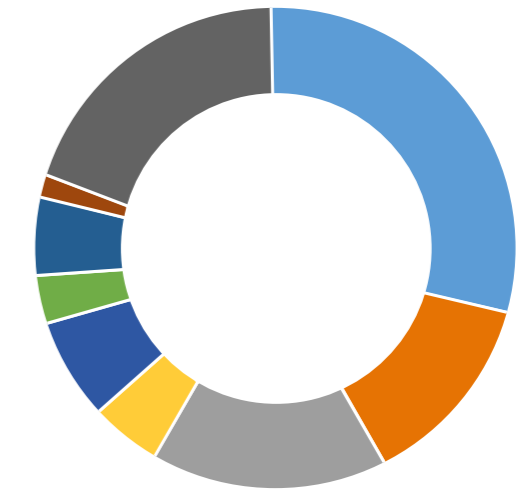
Please find our full financial statements in Appendix 1: Financial Report 2021-22 on: www.bellarinebayside.com.au

Revenues 2021 - 2022 - % of total \$8,960,755



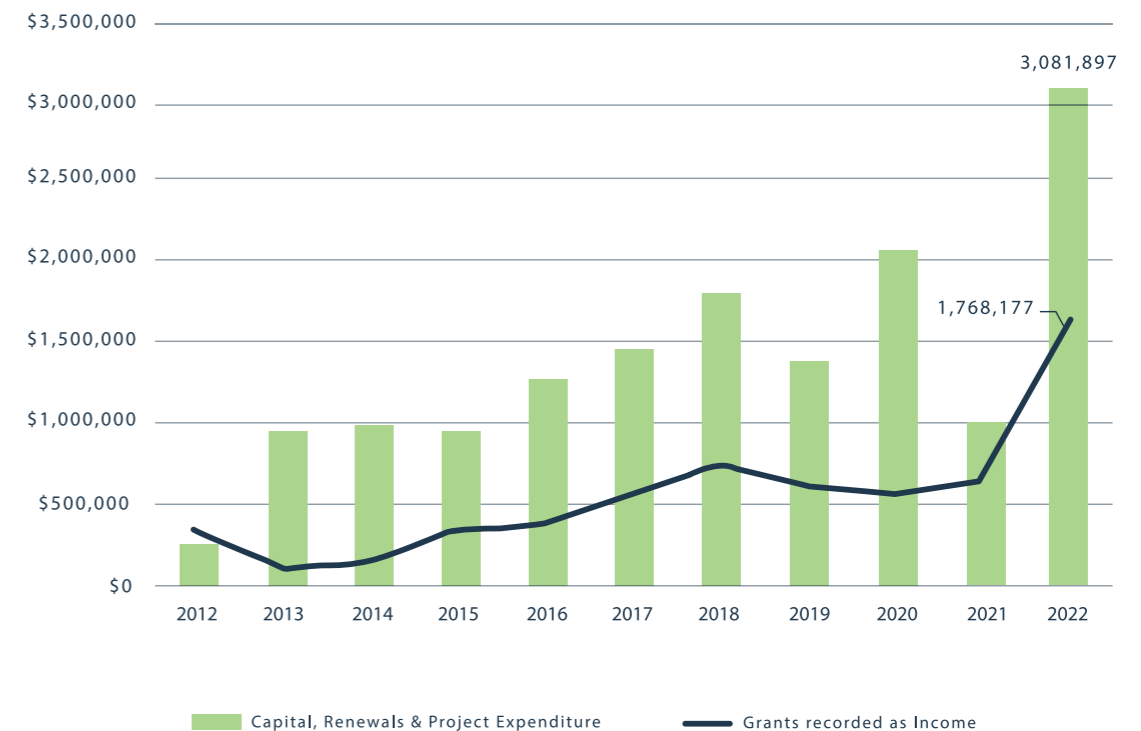
- Portarlington Holiday Park: 70%
- Indented Head Holiday Park: 13%
- St Leonards Holiday Park: 6%
- Foreshore Reserves & Assets: 2%
- Grants: 9%

2021 - 2022 Revenue Distribution % of total \$8,960,755



- Staff employment costs: 29%
- Depreciation: 14%
- Repairs & maintenance: 16%
- Electricity, gas, water: 5%
- Coastal management (admin): 7%
- Waste, garbage: 3%
- Cleaning: 6%
- Motor vehicle operating: 1%
- Asset replacement funds: 19%

Capital, Renewals & Project Activity





**Bellarine
Bayside**
Coastal Management

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