

Merricks Matters

Spring 2025

Welcome to the third edition of Merricks Matters for 2025.

Thank you to all our contributors for your articles and photos. In addition to the regular reports from the various Merricks Beach organisations, this edition features stories about several local gardens, input from our local councillor and some more interesting Merricks Memories.

Please send in your contributions for future editions. Letters, photos and articles are all welcome. Send your contributions to the Editor at contact@mbra.com.au.

Hope you have had a great start to Spring, and happy reading!

Joyce Lawrence, Editor

MBRA Update

The days are getting longer, the weather is getting warmer (sort of) and another year is drawing to an end. All of which means that it will soon be time to head for Merricks Beach. Hurrah!

The MBRA committee has been gearing up for another big summer, and we hope that residents will join us at the sand modelling and Davies Cup tennis tournament, to name a couple of our events. But in amongst planning for these frivolities, the committee has been continuing to work hard on a number of projects, on which full reports will be provided to members at the AGM on Sunday 4 January at 10am at MYC.

Papers for the AGM will be sent out in a few weeks. As usual, they will include a nomination form for office-bearers and general committee members. Please consider nominating; there will likely be at least a couple of vacancies and constant renewal of membership is important so that fresh ideas and perspectives are always being introduced.

Peter Cash – MBRA President

Upcoming MBRA Events

Annual Sand Modelling Competition

The annual Sand Modelling will be held at 10.00am on Sunday 28th December. Please put this date in your diary and join us on the beach to enjoy the morning followed by a sausage sizzle at the Merricks Yacht Club. Some models from previous years to get you inspired...



Di Hall – MBRA Committee Member

MERRICKS BEACH RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION INC



Davies Cup 2025/26

It may not feel much like it in Melbourne at the moment, but Summer is almost upon us and (amongst the other pleasures and delights of our wonderful village) that means that it is time to restrung the racquet, have a few practice serves and get ready for the Davies Cup. All residents and their friends are welcome (above 13yo).

The details:

Date	Friday 2 January 2026
Time	10.00am (the final is usually played at about 2.30pm)
Place	Merricks Beach tennis courts - cnr Surf & Foam Streets
Cost	Adults \$20 Non-adults \$10
Format	Doubles, as mixed as we can make it (both as to genders and standards)
Entry	email to president@mbra.com.au

Peter Cash – MBRA President

MBRA Residents' Survey

Thanks again to those who took the time to provide their feedback to ensure the MBRA can meet the current and future needs of the Merricks Beach community. The MBRA Committee has been considering the results and doing some additional analysis of them. Full details of the survey results can be accessed here: [Thanks for your feedback and input! Merricks Beach Residents' Survey Results. – mbra.com.au](#)

Sarah Lawrence and Hilary Dixon - MBRA Committee

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Sun 28 Dec 10am	MBRA Sand Modelling
Sun 28 Dec 12 noon	MBRA Sausage Sizzle, MYC
Fri 2 January 10am	Davies Cup, Tennis Courts
Sun 4 January 10am	MBRA AGM, MYC
Sun 18 January 9.30am	Friends of Bill Carroll Reserve Working Bee
Sat 25 January 3pm	Picnic in the Park (Bill Carroll Reserve)
Every Thursday, 5.30pm	Social drinks at MYC
Every Tuesday, 10am (excl school holidays)	Craft Group, Yacht Club

Merricks Beach Stormwater Strategy

As the MBRA has previously announced, we are working with Melbourne Water, Mornington Peninsula Shire Council and Wave Consulting to develop and implement a long-term strategy for improving the management of stormwater and drainage at Merricks Beach.

The proposed strategy has now been accepted by the MBRA Committee and published on the MBRA website at [Final Stormwater Strategy Report – mbra.com.au](https://www.mbra.com.au). A community consultation was held on 3 November to discuss the results and recommendations, and input from this is being used to fine-tune the strategy as needed.

Our major focus now is to implement the highest priority actions. First amongst these has been the installation of a roadside drain and associated crossovers along the south side of Wave St. This work was carried out by the Shire's contractors and should assist in diverting the flow of stormwater away from these blocks.

Next on the list is the replacement of a number of crossovers in other areas of the village, so that the street drains flow as intended. We're hopeful this work will be completed within the next six months (unfortunately the time frame is dependent on the Shire and their contractors, rather than the MBRA!).

We will then look at how the profile of the street drains might be improved across the village.

Lot-level Solutions

The modelling conducted by Wave concluded that the management of run-off from houses and driveways is a major contributor to the stormwater issues experienced in the village. As a result, Wave has recommended that we also encourage the implementation of a range of lot-level solutions. The MBRA Committee intends to address these recommendations by designing and implementing some community projects, whereby a group of property owners can learn about, and then get help in, implementing solutions on their own blocks.

One of these projects will be designed to assist property owners with solutions that help collect, retain and better use and manage stormwater within their own lot. We're hoping that Wave Consulting will be able to lead this project, with some support from Melbourne Water. At this stage, we're thinking the initial project will cater for about ten households. If we get more interest than that, we may be able to do a second or further iteration. The details are currently being finalised and we hope to announce them soon. So, watch this space, and if you are already interested in getting involved, please let us know!

The second project will look at how we can improve the functionality of the drainage easements that run across the backs of a number of properties in the village. These were originally designed to prevent run-off to downstream blocks. In Wave's view, the non-functioning of some of these easements has been a major contributor to the flooding and water-logging of many of the lower lying blocks in the village. The MBRA Committee envisages looking at this on a street-by-street basis, and we appreciate that the solutions for each of the affected blocks will need to be different.

We anticipate starting with the lowest lying areas and then proceeding up the catchment area as needed. Hopefully, we'll be able to start discussions with affected residents early in 2026. In the meantime, please feel free to contact us if you'd like to discuss your own situation.

The MBRA very much appreciates the time that residents with expertise in this area have contributed to our Stormwater Working Group, particularly Chris Chesterfield and Robyn Mitchell. We also continue to be extremely grateful to have received the financial support of Melbourne Water and Community Bank, Balnarring and District (Bendigo Bank) for this project.



Kriston Symons and Joyce Lawrence – MBRA Committee

Getting Off Gas

Following the strong response to the MBRA offering to facilitate home audits to assist individual residents interested in electrifying their homes, Ben Russell from Goodbye Gas visited the village on Thursday 11th September to run an information session and undertake several free home audits.

The MBRA has received very positive feedback about the audits, including the following comments:

We participated in the audit process advertised by the Goodbye Gas team. They conducted an audit online while we walked around the house with a mobile phone. It was a good discussion of the options available to us to remove gas.

We had installed a new gas hotplate and hot water system and were not keen to change those. However, we do need a new heater for ducted heating in the house.

They provided options and costings and were very knowledgeable about the issues we needed to consider. On request, they provided a quote and we plan to proceed with the option they recommended, including applying for the available state government subsidy.

They will supervise the installation; we considered their fee structure to be very reasonable.

Overall it helped us greatly to be able to discuss the options with a knowledgeable expert.

For those who are interested in electrification, but weren't able to get to the information session, please find some links to other useful reading:

<https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/guides-and-resources/strategies-and-initiatives/victorias-gas-substitution-roadmap>

<https://repowermornpen.org.au/>

<https://www.mornpen.vic.gov.au/Environment/Climate-Change/What-can-you-do-about-climate-change/Electrify-your-home>

<https://www.goodbyegas.com.au/>

Kriston Symons and Hilary Dixon – MBRA Committee

Foreshore Committee Update

You saw a koala in the foreshore? YES!

Below are some recent photos of wildlife in the foreshore reserve, a koala, wallaby and echidna. Follow us on Facebook or Instagram to see more and get regular updates on foreshore activities. You can also see the recent video on Facebook/Instagram of an echidna walking amongst the dunes at the base of the 'Cave Steps', 1.2k views on Facebook and counting. The work of volunteers planting, weeding and maintaining our narrow foreshore reserve is helping to retain a critical bio-link for wildlife to the east and west, and every contribution makes a difference.

<https://www.facebook.com/merricksbeachforeshore/>
https://instagram.com/merricksbeach_fc?igshid=YmMyMTA2M2Y=



Planting in the foreshore reserve opposite the tennis courts

Following a couple of storms over the past two years that have swept through the village, even the foreshore suffered. Opposite the tennis courts there has been extensive tree damage. With some generous financial support from the MBRA and a couple of community working bees, the fallen trees have been made safe and the area has been replanted with indigenous species and mulched. Nesting boxes have also been installed to encourage wildlife to set up home. As this area recovers it will present an encouraging backdrop for those playing tennis.

Bird, microbat, sugar glider and wildlife boxes

In addition to nesting boxes near the tennis courts, you may have noticed new nesting boxes going up in other locations. These are being installed because past land clearing on the foreshore has left

very few large old trees that contain hollows vital to so many species of native wildlife. There are more planned to go up shortly and we will provide updates on how they are going. If you want to participate in some 'citizen science' you can register your sightings of birds and other wildlife with 'iNaturalist'. Find this resource online or your smart device app store.



Indigenous plant display garden

With the financial support of the MBRA, we have established an indigenous flower garden on the Fire Track, between Kingswood Court and Cliff Road. There are more details in the separate article in this edition of *Merricks Matters*. Check it out on your next walk along the foreshore track.



Pine Slide erosion works – an update

The seawall at the bottom of the Pine Slide walking track between the Balnarring Beach and Merricks Beach foreshores needs to be rebuilt after damage by severe weather and coastal erosion over the past few years. Balnarring Beach and Merricks Beach Foreshore Reserve Committees of Management, with assistance from the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA), have secured funding to complete effective shoreline stabilisation at the site. Funding is being provided by DEECA's Treasurer's Advance for Severe Weather Event Recovery.

Works are likely to be completed by mid-2026, subject to first obtaining necessary approvals. Further details with a description of the proposed works are available at <https://balnarring.net/sea-wall-reconstruction-project/>

Help raise funds for the foreshore – two easy ways

#1 Container Deposit Scheme: We have been collecting cans and bottles in a crate at the bottom of Merricks Beach Road for about a year now. We would like to think that it has also helped reduce rubbish left on the beach. All deposits of eligible containers are gratefully received. You can also nominate Merricks Beach Foreshore Committee as a donation recipient when you deposit containers at 'Eastern Zone' collection centres.

#2 Ritchies Supermarket Community Benefit Program: You can nominate 'Merricks Beach Foreshore' as the recipient organisation if you are part of the Ritchies Community Benefit Program.

The income from these sources is instrumental in the Committee being able to purchase plants to continue with improvements for the foreshore.

Fisherperson rubbish and fires on the beach

We continue to get reports of fisherpeople leaving equipment, hooks, surplus bait and other items on the beach, as well as lighting fires and breaking vegetation to burn in fires. The damage to vegetation is clearly evident at the main beach access points. Pets have been injured by abandoned fishhooks. Damaging vegetation is prohibited and fires on the foreshore are prohibited at all times. If you witness a fire and it is an emergency situation call '000'; for non-emergency situations you can call the non-emergency police number 131 444 or Balnarring CFA 5983 5379. The Victorian Fisheries Authority has advised they will do extra patrols on Merricks Beach at various times of day and night.

Next foreshore events

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to maintaining the foreshore and attended our recent working bees. We will be holding a guided nature walk in summer; details to be provided in January closer to the event. We are also running our regular spring/summer beach cleaning sign-ups one Sunday morning per month. Keep an eye out for the notice boards on street corners and on Facebook/Instagram with dates, and then drop in at the bottom of Merricks Beach Road anytime between 8.30am-9.30am on the nominated Sundays to sign up.

[Merricks Beach Foreshore Reserve Committee of Management](#)

Friends of Bill Carroll Reserve

Things have been quietly happening at the Bill Carroll Reserve.

We now have a vehicle crossover, making it a lot easier for the maintenance crew to access the reserve.



Our newly refurbished bird hide has finally been installed. It has replaced the original one made by Peter Carroll, who was a sailmaker, as a dedication to his late father.

Thanks to the MBRA for its funding support for this project.

[Lainie Larsson - FOBCR](#)

Merricks Yacht Club Update

Summer is on its way, and Merricks Yacht Club is buzzing with activity again. Whether you sail, paddle, or just enjoy good company by the sea, there's a place for you at the club.

The hardy amongst us have already ventured out sailing every Saturday, but hopefully more will join us as the weather improves. And the club boats are available if you are keen to get back on the water, as are standup paddle boards.

We've planned a full summer of social events for members and guests — here's a taste of what's coming up:

27/12/25	4:30pm	Hello Summer drinks and nibbles
3/1/26	6:30pm	Family BBQ BYO Protein
10/1/26	6:30pm	Taste of Asia
17/1/26	7:30pm	Quiz Night
24/1/26	6:30pm	Paella Night

Book through the links on the club's website at [Merricks Yacht Club](#)

If you are curious about the club? Drop in for Thursday night drinks from 5.30pm — enjoy good company, snacks, and those unbeatable views. You'll see why so many locals have joined.

Over summer there will plenty for younger members including social events and junior sailing activities. **Salty Sisters** also return this year, with beach walks, and paddle board mornings for the women of Merricks. More information about all these activities, and how to join, on the club website at [Merricks Yacht Club](#)

See you around the club!

[Simon Corden – Commodore, MYC](#)

Merricks Beach Gardens

Naturalist Landscape Design Garden

Nature is alive, but the beauty of a living garden is incomparable. The rustling of native grasses forming a symphony with the croaks of frogs, the chirps of busy insects, a trickle of water. These are the details I believe give a garden its soul. This harmony is what drew me away from a decade in corporate marketing and towards landscaping, to start my own landscape design and construction business. I specialise in planning and creating Australian naturalist gardens, spaces of curated nature which embrace imperfections (like a rotted-out tree trunk or fallen leaves) and movement. I foster gardens which evolve with the seasons and invite native wildlife back where they belong.

Around two weeks ago we finished creating our latest work, a very personal project for me: my parents' new garden in Merricks Beach. It follows our philosophy, the naturalist principles we strive to promote and share, and was created using as many recycled materials as possible.



We used around 250 plants many of which are indigenous such as White Correa (*Correa alba*), Coastal Beard-Heath (*Leucopogon parviflorus*), Seaberry Saltbush (*Rhagodia candolleana*) and Blue Flax-Lily (*Dianella revoluta*).



We included a pond which is already singing with a chorus of frogs, and retained as many trees and native plants as possible from the existing garden. We hope this space we've nurtured survives for generations, evolving with each passing season, and becoming home for people and local wildlife to share.



Australian Naturalist Landscape design was pioneered by the likes of Ellis Stones, Gordon Ford and Edna Walling in the early 1930's and 1940's. Certain elements are embraced including ponds, rock work, natural materials such as (raw) wood and stone, and indigenous plants that are endemic to the local area. Ponds encourage wildlife to rest, a drinking hole, a bathing spot, a reprieve from the heat of summer and a home for frogs and insects. Considered placements of rocks and natural materials create hideaways and homes for insects and habitats for small critters, encouraging a diverse and bountiful ecosystem. And, of course,

indigenous plants are a key component, plants which have adapted over thousands of years to specific climate and soil conditions, and which create shelter for animals, small birds and insects. In contrast to imported plants, these natives require far less water and have the ability to enrich what would otherwise be considered poor soil. The more indigenous plants we can get in our gardens the healthier our world will be.

Kristen Mahler – Merricks Beach Resident

Indigenous Plant Display Garden

While strolling along the fire track recently you might have noticed that there is now a fenced area between Kingswood Court and Cliff Rd. It is the Merricks Beach Indigenous Plant Garden and represents a valued partnership between the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA), the Merricks Beach Residents' Association (MBRA) and the Foreshore Committee.

Over the past few years, DEECA has backed the establishment of a seed production area for regionally rare indigenous wildflowers with plants grown from seed sourced from local remnants.

Now, with the generous support of the MBRA, the installation of rabbit-proof fencing has allowed some of the established plants to be displayed in one protected area. This site was selected because it has similar conditions to the nearby Kingswood Court wildflower patch which is known to have some special indigenous plants that prefer a more open sunny location found nowhere else on the foreshore. The display garden will provide an opportunity for interested walkers to stop, see what is growing well and learn a bit more about the plants. The intention is to feature the grasses and flowering understorey plants to complement the larger trees and bushes seen elsewhere on the foreshore.

Local handyman Dave McAnulty installed the fencing in September in his usual high-quality style – thanks Dave! Hopefully it is successful in keeping out those raskily rabbits – we have learned some of these special plants are particularly yummy to rabbits 😞. Plants were sourced both from the seed production area at Balnarring Beach as well as many that have been grown by local volunteers.

Future plans include labelling to help learn about these special beauties.

Come and check it out. Although it's early days, this month you might see flowering: chocolate lilies (*Anthropodium strictum*), indigenous buttercups (*Ranunculus*), Running Postman (*Kennedia prostrata*), native flax (*Linum marginale*) and bluebells. (*Wahlenbergia*). What you won't see are aggies, polygala or pittosporum!



Merricks Beach Foreshore Reserve Committee of Management

A Garden of Memories on Palmers Hill Road

In 1977, Celia and John Weston purchased their home in Palmers Hill Road, joining in partnership with Celia's sister Lyn and her husband, Graeme Crossley. A few years later, Lyn and Graeme moved to a home on the corner of Minto and Foam Streets, but the sisters' close connection — and their shared love for Merricks — remained strong. Recently the Crossley's were sad to sell their home, but have visited and stayed with Celia at times.

Celia and Lyn's fondness for the area began in childhood, when they spent many happy holidays in Balnarring with their beloved Auntie Doll. As the years went by, both families continued the tradition, enjoying cherished holiday times at Merricks with their children.

After John's passing, Celia continued to care for and nurture the Palmers Hill property. Drawing on her background as a highly successful florist — once running her own shop in South Yarra — Celia has transformed her garden into a floral haven.

In springtime, her garden bursts into colour and fragrance. Delicate 'Pierre de Ronsard' roses bloom alongside the dainty Cecile Brunner buds and elegant white climbing roses. The sweet scent of Philadelphus drifts through the air, filling both the front and back gardens.



Pierre de Ronsard



Philadelphus

Celia's garden stands out from many of the native gardens in the area — not as a contrast, but as a celebration of diversity. Its romantic charm and nostalgic beauty bring a touch of old-world elegance to Palmers Hill Road, reminding us all how gardens can tell stories of love, memory, and care.



Cecil Brunner

Di Hall – MBRA Committee Member

Community Corner

Annual CPR & DEFIB Refresher 2025

Come refresh your CPR skills & maybe save a life. A hands on, non accredited session with manikins. ALL WELCOME

Bookings essential

When Thursday 8th January

Where Merricks Yacht Club

At 10 am (1- 1 ½ hrs)

Cost Free

Bookings...

Angela Richards

angelarichardsrn@gmail.com

Ph 0402108533

Angela Richards – Merricks Beach Resident

Rabbits!

Most of you have no doubt experienced increased rabbit activity over the last year or so.

About 10 years ago, the MBRA ran a co-ordinated approach to suppress rabbit numbers, with some success.

The Committee is now investigating a further series of activities to achieve suppression. The advice received from Council is that for suppression to be effective the activities have to be carried out broadly in a co-ordinated way at a landscape level.

Matters being considered include the release of a more recent strain of the calicivirus, education of Merricks households as to what they personally can do and the involvement of the broader community (for example the Foreshore Committee, the Merricks Coolart Catchment Landcare Group and possibly representatives from similar Balnarring organisations).

Nothing will happen before 2026 but the MBRA Committee would be interested in any views that might be held in the wider community.

Brad Vann – MBRA Committee Member

Your elected community advocate Cr. David Gill



Thank you for this opportunity to contribute to the informative Merricks Matters.

David is seen here with an airb'n'b 'home' for **native bees** in your garden. David is available for talks on native bees at any community meetings and all schools.

The Merricks Beach Road and Frankston-Flinders Road intersection controlled by VicRoads is constantly raised with me for advocacy. I welcome your feedback on the following road safety treatments or other measures you may like to raise.

- Extend the speed limit of 60kms coming from Balnarring to past the intersection
- Solid white line to make overtaking illegal
- An overhead light at the intersection midpoint to alert approaching vehicles of the T-intersection
- Further improvements to line of sight

Your views on **dog leash free areas**, on-lead walking hours and dog exclusion zones, such as in wildlife reserves, will be referred to the Shire as Council continues to review local laws.

Community concerns about **spraying of roadsides** by the Shire and State Government Departments are often raised. Resultant spray drift complaints have increased from farmers and residents about effects on property drinking water and native vegetation.

Council has a 'No spray' register for sensitive areas, however this is not well known or utilised. I welcome your views.

Thank you to our local CFA units for helping us prepare for the fire danger period. They provide information to help keep your family and property safe with the main emphasis being to have a fire plan and knowing when to activate it.

CFA website – www.cfa.vic.gov.au

David Gill – MPSC Shire Councillor, Coolart Ward

david.gill@mornpen.vic.gov.au



Artists Open Studios
2025

15-16 & 22-23 November
Open 10am-5pm

Save the date! Our famous Artists Open Studio Weekends are coming.

The artists of the Peninsula Studio Trail are opening their working studios to the public.

Come and meet the artists, see works in progress, ask questions and get a glimpse behind the scenes as to how artworks are created. Work will also be available for purchase.

We would love to see you there!



**21-23 November
2025**

Coolart Homestead and
Wetlands, Somers, Victoria

Birdwatching with experts

Presentations
Displays
Learn how to be a
birdwatcher.
Art class
Social activities
Free art show
Big Bird Bake off!
plus more

Tickets on sale from mid
August through **WTTIX**



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Di Hall (diannehall73@icloud.com) – MBRA Committee member

Bereavement Thanks

To the Merricks Beach Community,
I would like to thank you all for the kindness love and support you have shown me and my family after the passing away of Mum and Peter.

In moments like these I am reminded just how lucky we are to be part of such a caring and generous community.
Your compassion brought comfort during a difficult time and I will always treasure that with deepest thanks.

Bern Hayes (Crowe)

Jenny Rogers and family would like to pass on their thanks to MBRA President Peter Cash and the MBRA Committee for the kind words and lovely flowers sent following the passing of their much loved husband, father and grandfather, Ian.

Joyce Lawrence - Editor

Merricks Memories

Sourced by Di Hall

Where there Once was a Cave

Between Merricks Beach and Balnarring Beach there was once a popular feature known as "Pirates' Cave", or "Smugglers' Cave". The opening was located about half way up the west face of the headland referred to simply as The Point. Above it the cliff face rose vertically, dotted with small shrubs that clung to the rock face. Below was a steep, slippery, exposed slope dropping down to the beach. The shallow cave, barely high enough for an adult to stand upright, was most easily reached by a track along a very narrow shelf of rock. Clumps of grass offered a hand-hold for the adventurers who wanted to reach the cave's mouth. The descent was often by sliding directly down to the beach.

Although there were several tales as to how the cave was formed – an Aboriginal shelter, a lookout during World War 2 – it was actually the result of mining undertaken in the early years of the 20th Century. In 1911 Joseph Davis took out a licence to remove cobbles from the rock shelf at the base of The Point and to extract pigments from the limestone for use in paints. There was also a second, smaller cave excavated on the other side of the headland, facing south and closer to the base of the cliff.

Davis worked the area intermittently over a fifteen-year period, often employing several men to assist. During the mid-1920s this venture drew opposition from a number of people who had bought land along the clifftop in the new subdivision of Manly/Merricks Beach. Alarmed by increased erosion, they protested to the Department of Land and Survey and a study was undertaken. It concluded that erosion to the area was the result of 'natural causes' and not related to the mining. However, Davis did not renew his licence when it expired in early 1927.

The Cave remained a landmark and an adventure point for many years. Accelerated erosion in the early 2000s saw the erection of warning signs which did little to deter climbers. In 2004 the Merricks Beach Foreshore Committee, concerned by the danger that climbers faced from rockfalls while scrambling on the cliff, had the opening filled in.

Vegetation was planted so that, over time, it would once again merge into its natural surroundings.



Photo of The Cave taken in 2001.

Ilma Hackett
Balnarring & District Historical Society 76

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