

# Merricks Matters

Summer 2026

Welcome to the first edition of Merricks Matters for 2026.

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, artwork and photos from several local residents, input from our local councillor and some more interesting Merricks Memories. We also sadly farewell two highly valued members of the Merricks Beach community, David Stewart and Wendy Mitchell.

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](mailto:contact@mbra.com.au).

Hope you have had a lovely Summer, and enjoy reading about what's been happening!

*Joyce Lawrence, Editor*

## MBRA Update

As we move into autumn and enjoy the last of the summer weather and yet another long weekend, this edition of Merricks Matters comes at a time for us to all reflect on the summer activities.

The MBRA committee has welcomed some new office-bearers and committee members who have been highly engaged to facilitate a smooth transition of knowledge. There has been one meeting this year post the AGM held in January 2026 and the committee is focused on the year ahead and continuing to move forward on a range of initiatives many of which have updates in this edition of Merricks Matters.

These initiatives include continued improvements to the Frankston Flinders and Merricks Beach Rd Intersection, investigation of dust suppression options, consideration of rabbit control options and ongoing work around roads and stormwater including continued liaison with the Mornington Peninsula Shire.

We are also looking at updating the software we use for database, mailouts and membership subscriptions and are considering different software options including the one that the Yacht Club currently uses.

The committee always values hearing from residents on what can make our village even better, so please reach out if you have any ideas or perspectives.

*Kriston Symons – MBRA President*

## Davies Cup 2025/26

The 2025/2026 edition of the Davies Cup took place on Friday 2 January 2026. Spectacularly good weather greeted the bumper field of contestants; so many, in fact, that an urgent call had to be made for a fourth court to accommodate one section of the draw. Thanks to Craig and Nisha for answering the call (and to Bernard

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## MERRICKS BEACH RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION INC



and Christine for making Stade de Bluff available once again).

The 4 hotly contested round robin sections of 5 pairs each produced 4 semi-finalists (with a rather 'Foxy' flavour, it must be said) to play off, resulting in a final which pitted Seamus Sealey and Marcus Nield against Tim Dickinson and Campbell Drake.

Congratulations to Seamus and Marcus (pictured) who were the eventual victors. And thanks to all who participated in what was another fun day of community tennis in our village.



*Peter Cash – MBRA Vice-President*

### DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Sun 8 March 10am	Foreshore Committee Working Bee near tennis courts
Sun 5 April	Easter activities, Bill Carroll Reserve
Every Thursday, 5.30pm	Social drinks at MYC
Every Tuesday, 10am (excl school holidays)	Craft Group, Yacht Club

## Annual Sand Modelling Competition

Sunday 28th December 2025 - a perfect day on Merricks Beach. Blue sky and a sea breeze, the tide just right leaving plenty of beach for the annual competition. The 120 plus competitors making the most of it.

The many spectators, largest crowd I have seen on the beach for many years were rewarded with high quality models. This is becoming the social event of the year, with many residents present and past meeting together.



Thank you to the MBRA, they now fully fund the event. No knocking on doors for donations. A special thanks to all the Judges who had to make very difficult decisions due to the quality of the models.

Congratulations to all who competed.

### The Rosebowl Trophy

Best on the beach

Awarded to Erin Gellie - The Sea Shell



### The Ken Towe Trophy

Most Original exhibit

Awarded to Sahaja Wood - Bluey & Bingo

### The Rick Daly Trophy

Junior Encouragement

Awarded to Cooper Garland (aged 9) - Fish & Whale

Thank you to all the competitors and spectators for making this

event so successful. We look forward to seeing you next year. The annual sausage sizzle followed.



If anyone can help us determine when the sand modelling competition commenced, please let Di Hall, secretary MBRA know. We believe it was pre 2nd WW (early 1940's)

Sue Rutley – Retiring Convenor

## Thank You, Sue Rutley

Sue Rutley is a much-valued member of the Merricks Beach community, well known for her tireless voluntary work over many years with the Yacht Club and, more recently, as the organiser of the annual Sand Modelling Competition for the Residents' Association.

Sue took on the role of convenor in 2011 and has worked diligently ever since to ensure this much-loved and well-attended event runs smoothly each year. This season marked her final year in the role, although we're sure Sue will continue to be there in the background, as she so often is, lending a helping hand wherever needed.



We extend our heartfelt thanks to Sue for her years of hard work and dedication. From storing ropes, posts and signs in her garage, to buying and bagging lollies for the children, preparing prize

envelopes, organising judges, setting up on the day, and presenting the awards — Sue has done it all.

Our community is deeply grateful for Sue's efforts in making the Sand Modelling Competition such a special and memorable day for generations of families.

Thank you, Sue.

*Di Hall – MBRA Secretary*

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## Sandmodelling in the 1930s and 40s

Does your family have any old sandmodelling photos you'd be happy to share with us? Please contact Di Hall on 0427 947 662 or via email to [diannehall73@icloud.com](mailto:diannehall73@icloud.com).



*Left -1933 Jane Handley nee Gooch*

*Below - 1947 Shirley Johns*



## Merricks Beach Stormwater Strategy

As reported at the AGM and in the previous edition of Merricks Matters, we have now commenced implementing the Merricks Beach Stormwater Strategy. Three projects are in their early stages.

### Merricks Beach Community Stormwater Project

Ten households have volunteered to pilot this project, aimed at lot-level solutions. Participating households will have a stormwater audit done of their properties and will receive a report on cost-effective and practical strategies to help collect, retain and better use and manage stormwater within their own lot. We've had an initial meeting of the group and several of the audits have been undertaken, with the rest due to be done in March, prior to a second meeting to discuss findings and solutions in April.

## Easement Functionality Project

We're currently investigating the functionality of the various drainage easements in the lower sections of the village, and the various options that could assist them to function better. We plan to reach out to residents of Wave St South and Surf St (West) soon, but if you live in another lower lying area of the village and have any concerns, we'd love to talk with you too.

### Road profile redesign

Wave Consulting will shortly commence work on this task, in consultation with the MBRA Stormwater Working Group, the Shire and residents. It will result in a new design that we hope will improve both drainage and the quality of stormwater run-off in our street drains. Once we have an agreed design, we hope to trial it on a short pilot stretch of road in the village.

The MBRA very much appreciates the involvement of residents in these initial projects. We also continue to be extremely grateful to have received the financial support of Melbourne Water and Community Bank, Balnarring and District (Bendigo Bank).

Community Bank  
Balnarring & District

 Bendigo Bank

 Melbourne  
Water

*Joyce Lawrence – MBRA Stormwater Working Group*

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## A Wonderful Summer at Merricks Yacht Club

It's been a terrific summer for both our social and sailing members at **Merricks Yacht Club**.

Our functions have been especially popular this year, with wonderful food enjoyed in one of the best waterfront settings on Westernport. The annual quiz night was, as always, a highlight, and weekday drinks have drawn great crowds keen to relax and take in those spectacular sunset views. The Tuesday ladies' craft group is still as popular as ever, while the Friday men's gang are active keeping the club in good shape and solving the world's problems.

Out on the water, racing fleets have been strong, with several new members getting back into sailing using the club boats. Our junior sailors have brought their usual energy and enthusiasm to Wednesday sessions throughout summer, making great use of the club Pacers. Merricks was also well represented in the Westernport Challenge and the Montalto Marathon — and I can now proudly say I completed a half-marathon!

The **Salty Sisters** group continues to go from strength to strength, with 36 women now connected via WhatsApp. In December and early January they enjoyed five walks and two paddles, and Karen Buckingham is hoping to offer one or two sailing sessions before Easter.

As we move into February, Thursday night drinks are back in full swing, and we're looking forward to our Easter BBQ — always a relaxed and friendly occasion.

If you're not yet a member, we'd love to welcome you. Come down on a Wednesday at 5.30pm for a sunset drink, or drop in on a Saturday to chat about sailing membership and getting out on the water.

We're always pleased to see new faces.

*Simon Corden – Commodore, MYC (commodore@merricks.org)*

## Foreshore Committee Update

### Foreshore Nature walk

With the success of our recent community nature walk we will be looking to do another in the near future. Thank you to our committee member Dr Nick Williams (Professor of Urban Ecology and Urban Horticulture, University of Melbourne) who led over 30 people on the recent guided nature walk explaining foreshore revegetation works and teaching people how to identify weeds and native plants. Nick shared suggestions for home garden plantings, and how to avoid plants that become weeds in the foreshore. You can see more information and photos on our Facebook and Instagram site and find details of other upcoming foreshore events.

<https://www.facebook.com/merricksbeachforeshore/>  
[https://instagram.com/merricksbeach\\_fc?igshid=YmMyMTA2M2Y=](https://instagram.com/merricksbeach_fc?igshid=YmMyMTA2M2Y=)



### Upcoming works on handrails - Infrastructure Grant

The Committee has been successful in being awarded funding from DEECA (the Victorian Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action) to replace some of the handrails on access paths in the foreshore reserve. Over the course of the next few months we intend to replace the handrail on the Foam St access path steps followed by replacement of sections of the handrails on the staircases at the Cave Steps access path, two of the handrails at Surfies' Lookout and the handrails on the top section of Pine Slide access path.

### Please, no cats in the foreshore

Cats can be wonderful companion animals, but they are also very efficient predators of our native wildlife. Even well fed and cared for cats instinctively hunt and chase. Merricks Beach Foreshore is home to many native animals and birds and we all have a responsibility to protect them.

A number of domestic cats have been spotted on the foreshore presenting an unacceptable risk to this wildlife. Did you know the Mornington Peninsula Shire Council has a 24/7 cat curfew, which means that cats must be contained to the owner's property at all times? The responsibility for managing pet cats rests with their owners. If a cat owner cannot ensure their cat remains on their property at all times, it will need to be kept indoors and only be outdoors under supervision. Cat runs/enclosures are a great option to allow cats to enjoy the outdoors safely (for options see <https://agriculture.vic.gov.au/livestock-and-animals/animal-welfare-victoria/cats/keeping-your-cat-safe-at-home>)

If you come across a wandering cat there are a number of actions you can take. Visit the Council website to understand what options are available <https://www.mornpen.vic.gov.au/Your-Property/Animals-and-Pets/Nuisance-Animals/Wandering-Cats>

### No fires on the beach – at any time

Unfortunately, we have received a number of reports of fires on the beach over summer, including two incidents where the Balnarring CFA volunteers attended to address the beachgoers who had the fires. Fires on the beach present a very real risk and are prohibited all year at all locations on the foreshore, including the beach. 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.

### Sun 8 March Working Bee opposite the tennis courts

Continuing the recent work with the community in this part of the foreshore, there will be a working bee on Sunday 8 March at 10am in the foreshore reserve opposite the tennis courts and nearby areas. We will be weeding and mulching and doing some general maintenance. Please come along and help out, or just drop in for a chat.

*Merricks Beach Foreshore Reserve Committee of Management*

## Friends of Bill Carroll Reserve

### Drinks at the Park

On Sunday the 25th of January a small but select group came to enjoy the late afternoon sun, share a drink, connect with friends and welcome newcomers.



*Barbara Hogarth – Friends of Bill Carroll Reserve*

## Farewell to two much-valued community members

### Vale David Stewart

We are sad to hear of the passing of David Stewart. David was a hard-working volunteer on the Merricks Beach Foreshore Committee for many years, doing a lot of the essential foreshore maintenance manual tasks that required someone at Merricks. Always politely spoken, David tackled many of the issues that come with looking after the foreshore. Spraying out many unwanted outbreaks of blackberry using his spray rigs, fixing handrails, mulching excessive dead wood, assisting in removing fallen trees across walking tracks to name just a few. He would also meet up with contractors and the CFA on site for works needing to be done. With chainsaw in hand and well used safety gear, he even cleared fallen trees or branches across roads within the village, with the sawn logs going to those who needed some firewood.

Even when speech left him, there was still a cheery wave amid the hand signs.

His presence on the foreshore has been missed, as will his presence now gone from around the village.

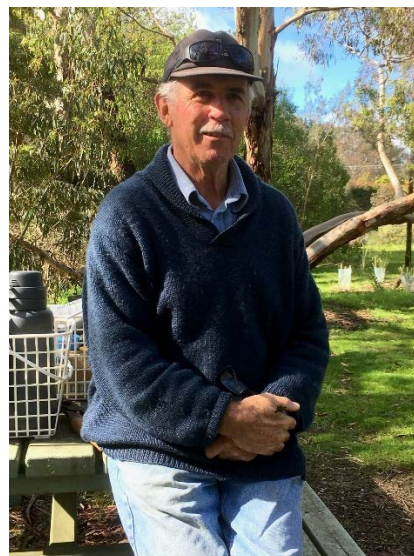
R.I.P. David from the Merricks Beach Foreshore Committee.

*Merricks Beach Foreshore Reserve Committee of Management*

### Tribute to David Stewart

The FBCR notes with sadness the passing of David Stewart and would like to acknowledge, amongst his many contributions to our community, all the work done by him on the Bill Carroll Reserve. For many years David did all the heavy lifting on the reserve. If he saw there was a tree down, he would chainsaw it, stack the logs and chip the greenery. When the grass needed mowing he would come on his ride on mower, assess the situation and cut the grass to a length that was suitable for the season. He kept the worst of the

weeds at bay with judicious spraying and quietly got rid of the rabbits. Even after the council took over, he was often the first on the scene to clean up after a storm. David Stewart was a quiet achiever whose skilled and sensitive contribution to the maintenance of the reserve leaves us all in his debt. Thank you David, we are deeply grateful.



*Photo courtesy of Elaine Larsson*

*Barbara Hogarth – Friends of Bill Carroll Reserve*

### Memories of David Stewart

David Stewart was the youngest son of Lorna and Doug Stewart, part of a family of five boys and one girl. The Stewart family first holidayed at Merricks Beach in the 1960s through the generosity of family friends, and in 1968 purchased two blocks of land in Palmers Hill Road.

In 1969, a prefab CHI holiday home was erected on one block. By 1971, when all the children had left home, Doug and Lorna moved to Western Australia, selling the family home in Melbourne. From then on, the Merricks Beach house became the place where the family regularly gathered as marriages, children, and new chapters unfolded. As the family spread across Australia, Merricks Beach remained their shared place of childhood memories and a setting for the next generation's adventures.

As a strong and capable 15-year-old, David appears in early Yacht Club photographs helping to dig footings and prepare the building site. He was always keen to be involved in local social life, with many evenings spent around the fire on the Stewart block, sharing stories and laughter after days at the beach or sailing on the bay. For a few years David sailed competitively at the Yacht Club with his brother Rob in an Attunga and enjoyed many happy times on the water.

At Rick Daly's 21st birthday in January 1971, it became clear that David and Anna Thiemeyer — daughter of Jean and Hal Thiemeyer, the first Commodore of the Yacht Club — were a couple, much to everyone's delight. Their romance continued over the next three years through letters, as Anna worked in Melbourne and David worked on farms interstate.

David and Anna married in February 1974 at St Mark's Church in

Balnarring. Phyllis Cole, landowner of the paddocks across Merricks Beach Road, played the organ, and Bill Carroll drove the couple in his lovely Jaguar car to the Thiemeyer home in Bayview Road for a garden reception. Once again, Merricks Beach was filled with family and celebration.

Over the following 35 years, David and Anna lived and worked on farming properties in South Australia and regional Victoria, always returning to Merricks Beach with their sons, Jamie and David, for treasured beach holidays.

In 2009, David and Anna built a new home on their block and moved to live permanently at Merricks Beach. David continued working on local properties even after his diagnosis with Motor Neurone Disease at the end of 2024.

A quiet achiever, David served for many years on the Foreshore Committee and was an active supporter of the Friends of the Bill Carroll Reserve. He could often be found whipper-snipping, mowing, clearing fallen trees, pruning, weeding, or helping clean up after storms. He was a constant source of practical help and support to neighbours and friends.

David passed away peacefully on 15 December 2025, surrounded by his loving family in his much-loved Merricks Beach home. He will be fondly remembered and greatly missed by his many long-time friends in the community.

David and Anna shared nearly 52 happy years of marriage. He is survived by Anna, their sons Jamie and David, daughters-in-law Anna and Jacqui, and six grandchildren. Anna's sister Jenny Glennon, another local resident, was also very close to David and is a great support to all the family.

Our sincere sympathy is extended to them all.



*Di Hall – MBRA Secretary*

## Vale Wendy Mitchell



Wendy passed away at home on 27 December aged 82, in the company of John, children and grandchildren. Wendy was a gentle and kind person, loyal friend and John's loving partner for 65 years. The 300 plus people at her Celebration gathering in the grounds of MONTALTO speak to the many she touched on her life's journey.

Wendy was a lover of nature and had a creative gift that was magnified in her difficult final years.

A Primary and Arts and Crafts Teacher then full-time mother, from 1986-1990 the Mitchell family lived overseas in the US then the UK. Back home Wendy used her gift in Remedial Massage before joining John and daughter Heidi in the creation of what was to become MONTALTO. Her kitchen gardens were central to the business success, many years before the evolution of paddock to plate trends. In her gardens she had a welcoming presence and became Mother Earth and friend to staff.

Her long association with Merricks and Balnarring Beaches began with the purchase by her family of the land, now 13 Cliff Rd, in 1967. Feathers, pinecones, gifts from the sea will remain in place as reminders of how fortunate we are in our piece of paradise and her appreciation for nature's gifts.

*[Editor's note: thank you to the families of David and Wendy for providing input and photos for these memories]*

# Merricks Beach Gardens

## Adam & Andrea Bell's Garden

Andrea and Adam's garden is located at the top of Bayview Rd, Merricks Beach. Some may remember it as Lady Potter's orchard.

They commenced the garden in April 2023, with the main motivation being to get the home and garden out of the 'Merricks mud'. They also were looking to establish a low maintenance and native garden... something many of our Merricks Beach community can relate to.

Adam has created paths and private courtyards overflowing with natives which are lush and full, all visible from every aspect within the house.



All the trees that had to be removed for the build were kept and now surround the wood pile feature in the front garden. Tank water irrigates all the garden along with the toilets, laundry and showers. The above ground tanks are topped up by an underground tank, which is connected to a bore for final back up. Only a plumber 🙌. All the stormwater remains on the block.



The pathways and courtyards are Wistow crazy paving or gravel, which also surrounds the garden beds, so no soil is in contact with the house, to prevent termites.

Adam mentioned while all the plants are flourishing, one Manna gum could have been better placed, as it has grown so well and will interfere with the solar panels in time.

While natives were the initial plan, family gifts have given space to some olives, citrus, rosemary and hydrangeas which are loving life at Merricks Beach. Hands up to all the help from both 'Tall Trees' and 'Sheoak Design' for their assistance with the design and plant choices.

Today's hint from Adam is always 'Seasol' when planting and those Kangaroo paws...cut them back really hard after flowering.



Adam and Andrea's garden is such an inspiration and so beautiful. As you may expect, some of their plants are various varieties of eucalyptus, banksia, correas, grevilleas, westringias, miscanthus, hakeas, and Dicksonia antarctica. There are too many to list but together they have created their mud-free haven. A huge thankyou to Adam and Andrea for sharing their garden.



*Angela Richards – MBRA Committee Member*

## Community Corner

### Annual CPR Training 2026

Our annual free CPR training session on Thursday, 8th January at the Merricks Yacht Club was well attended by an enthusiastic group of all ages.

Many thanks to Sophie Uren and Kylie De Baquiere, they provided a CPR refresher along with a defibrillator demonstration and practice, and how to treat choking workshop. Thank you to all those attendees who came to Kylie and Sophie's engaging presentation.

Thank you so much also to the Merricks Yacht Club for providing the venue as always, along with support from both the MBRA and local community. We now have new pads and batteries.

Please check all your family know the location of your defibrillators at Merricks Beach. The next CPR session will be mentioned in both the MBRA and MYC newsletters later in the year. All are welcome, practice saves lives. Hope to see you all there in 2027.



For anyone interested in accredited CPR or First Aid please let me know.

Cheers

Angela Richards

[angelarichardsrn@gmail.com](mailto:angelarichardsrn@gmail.com)

*Angela Richards – MBRA Committee Member*

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### Your elected community advocate Cr. David Gill



*Thanks for providing me with an opportunity to contribute to this edition of Merricks Matters.*

I asked for your views on **dog leash free areas** and received a lot of feedback. In summary most respondents want dogs kept on leads at the beach and kept out of wildlife reserves. The on-lead walking hours was reasonably close between extending the hours further and remaining as is. A small majority wanted no change. Thank you for your feedback.

It is now Council **budget** preparation time. I welcome your views on Capital Works, service levels and needs and spending priorities. I raise your budget concerns however it is always difficult to provide for our need with the lower population and number of wards on this side of the Peninsula.

Your individual input by providing community feedback ensures the opportunity to be heard by councillors and officers. Write to Councillor support and ask for the CEO and all councillors to be sent your included views. [councillor.support@mornpen.vic.gov.au](mailto:councillor.support@mornpen.vic.gov.au)

With a **State election** later this year I welcome your input on local priorities for advocacy to our local State politicians.

The more you raise issues the more likely our priorities will be heard. Related issues raised lately with me include

- Road funding
- The South East outfall hinterland recycled water project
- Disappearance of iconic views
- Peninsula Wildlife Hospital
- Walking path links
- Koala bio-links
- Metropolitan status affecting the village character and uniqueness of the Mornington Peninsula
- Help for the Arts Industry.

**Womin Djeka Balnarring Ngargee 2026** will be held at the Emu Plains Reserve on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> March 10am -5pm.

This community festival honours and celebrates First People's Cultures and showcases cultures including live music. A wonderful day out to put in your diary now.

### Interim Landslide Overlay

There is much community concern about the State Planning Minister's enforcement of an erosion management overlay affecting up to 33,000 lots including 27,000 residential properties, all to be implemented by Council in a catch all reaction to the McCrae landslide.

The landslide was caused by a leaking water main managed by the local water authority.

There will be new, expensive, rate payer sponsored mapping to rule out landslide risk which may take years to complete and is likely to find only a few isolated landslide risks on the Mornington Peninsula.

If you are affected, please contact your local State politicians with any questions and please cc me in.

Enjoy autumn on the Peninsula.

Regards,

David.

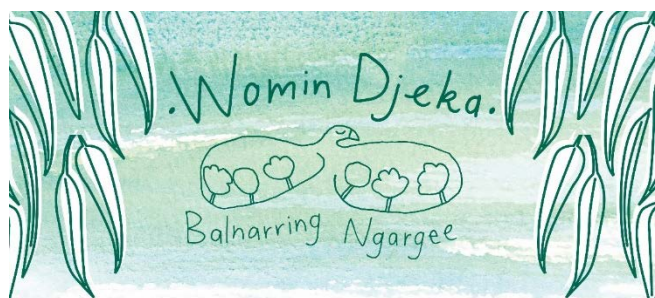
[david.gill@mornpen.vic.gov.au](mailto:david.gill@mornpen.vic.gov.au)

*David Gill – MPSC Shire Councillor, Coolart Ward*

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## Local News and Events

### Womin Djeka Community Festival



Womin Djeka Balnarring Ngargee [Womin Djeka – Balnarring Ngargee](#) is a festival where the whole community can gather to share, begin conversations and walk with First Peoples.

On Saturday 14th March 2026 you are invited join in the fun and learning at the 9th festival now at Emu Plains, Balnarring (Balnarring Racecourse).

Presented by Balnarring Preschool with guidance from Boon Wurrung Elder Professor N'arwee't Carolyn Briggs AM, each year the festival evolves with new learning opportunities to engage all members of the community. This is a family friendly event where there are lots for everyone to do and experience.

This year we are excited to welcome the sensational Dan Sultan [Dan Sultan Website](#) as the headline act along with outstanding First Nations Artists Candice Lorrae, Canisha and Kiwat.



Make sure to join in one of the workshops lead by first nations people, generously sharing their cultures, as well as check out the fabulous market area where you can find lots of treasures from first nations creatives. There's even more to discover at the First Nations organisation's stalls. Maybe buy a plant or 2 from Willum Warrain's indigenous nursery stall?



Visit the Caring for Country area which showcases the contribution of many of our wonderful volunteer groups – better than ever with at least 12 groups including a stall hosting the Merricks Beach Foreshore Committee!

And never to be forgotten are the displays from many local schools who will be showcasing their learning about first nations cultures.

Of course, there will be food trucks and coffee ready to keep your energy levels up so you can be sure to make the most of this amazing day of fun, culture and learning.

Entry is by donation and everyone's invited to come along on Saturday, March 14, from 10am-5pm at Emu Plains Reserve, Coolart Rd, Balnarring. Find out more at [Womin Djeka – Balnarring Ngargee](#)

*Lindsey Duffield – Merricks Beach Community Member*

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## The Embroiderers Guild of Victoria – Flinders Branch

We invite you to attend our **Coastal Threads Exhibition**



**Saturday 21st March 2026**

10:00am to 4:00pm

**Sunday 22nd March 2026**

10:00am to 3:00pm

**Venue: Homes and Acreage**

Shop1A/3000 Frankston-Flinders Road, Balnarring

The Embroiderers Guild, Victoria – Flinders Branch Biennial Exhibition will be held in the rooms of Homes and Acreage. Come along and enjoy viewing the variety of work on display from the creative hands of our embroidery and textile artist members. There will be a raffle, door prize and a gift stall where you can purchase a variety of items handmade by our members. EFTPOS available.

The Flinders Branch meets 1st, 3rd and 5th Mondays of the month, February to December at St Marks Anglican Church Hall, Balnarring from 9:45am to 4:00pm

We run regular classes with a large variety of techniques. All skill levels catered for.

*Kay Matthews – Merricks Beach Resident (and President of the Flinders Branch of the Embroiderers Guild of Victoria)*

## Repower Mornington Peninsula Forum

[Solar and batteries – is now the time? Flinders | Repower Mornington Peninsula](#)

**3pm Sunday 15 March, Flinders Civic Hall**

With the federal subsidy on home batteries, state rebates on solar panels and increasing electricity bills, many people are realising there is no time like the present to invest in home renewable energy and storage.

This popular event returns to Flinders for one last time, proudly hosted by Repower Mornington Peninsula and Flinders Zero Carbon Community (FZCC).

## Merricks Beach Community Trades List

[Something broken? Need some help at home? Looking for a reliable local tradesperson? – mbra.com.au](#)

Not that easy to find on the MBRA website, but use the link above to help! Put together by Di Hall on behalf of the MBRA, using local recommendations, this listing can be invaluable. Di is happy to hand deliver a copy to anyone who requests it, and she would welcome additional recommendations too. Please contact Di on 0427 947 662 or via email to diannehall73@icloud.com

*Di Hall – MBRA Secretary*

## From the Editor's In-box

Thank you to everyone who contributed their news or shared their photos or creativity with me for inclusion in this edition. I look forward to getting your input for future issues too!

### Tall Ship Sailing Trip

I booked to sail on The Enterprize\* after it sailed from Melbourne into Mornington for the weekend. The weather on Sunday could not have been worse for sailing. Strong wind gusts, drenching rain and choppy seas. I donned my wet weather gear and hoped for the best. Many passengers were sea-sick but somehow I was not one of them. In fact I found it exhilarating. Afterwards I sheltered in a cafe on the wharf with a welcome hot coffee and a rug and produced this sketch of The Enterprize.



\*The 27 metre topsail schooner Enterprize is a fully operational replica of a tall ship originally constructed in Hobart in 1830 The Enterprize.

Carole Milton – Merricks Beach Resident

### Merricks Beach Lights Up (or Not!)

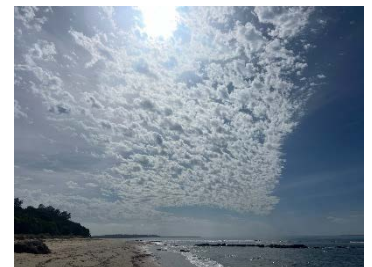
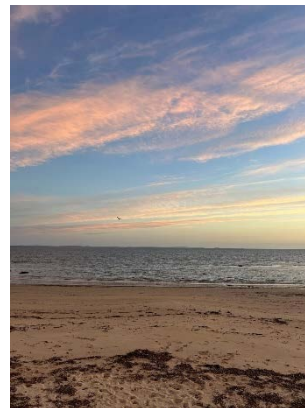
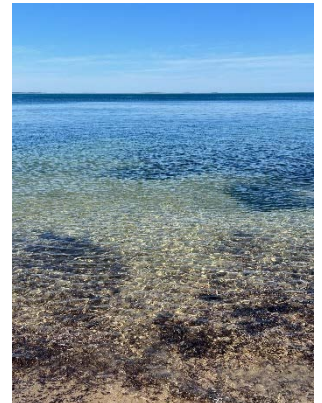
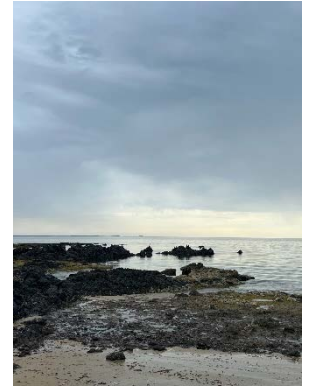


*Aurora Australis from Merricks Beach, 10.30pm 20 Jan 2026  
Photo courtesy of Kathy Clarke*



*A tree branch falling on powerlines triggered a village blackout and a rapid emergency response, Minto St, Dec 2025  
Photos courtesy of Sarah Lawrence and Ian (Storm) Johnson*

### The Changing Moods of a Merricks Beach Summer

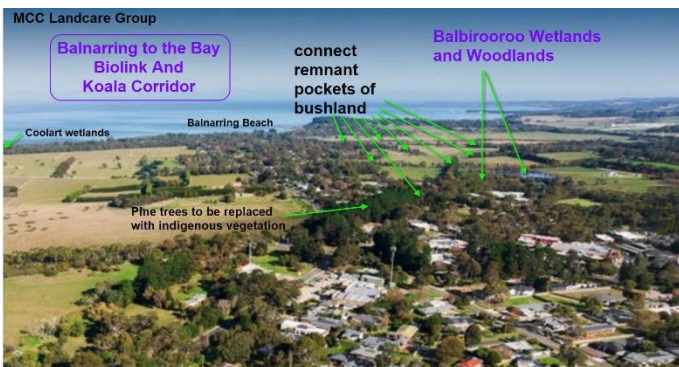


Sasha Taylor – Merricks Beach Resident

## Merricks – Coolart Landcare

The Mornington Peninsula Landcare Network (MPLN) represents the 14 Landcare groups across the Peninsula. Within the Merricks catchment, the Merricks–Coolart Catchment Landcare Group continues to be a driving force for conservation and sustainable land management. With 88 active members drawn from Balnarring, Balnarring Beach, Merricks, Merricks Beach, Merricks North, Somers and parts of Red Hill, the group works to protect biodiversity, improve water quality and support the long-term health of the catchment. The group caters to a wide range of interests including sustainable farming, plant identification, weed control, feral animal management and broader environmental care. They are known for being friendly, active and welcoming, offering regular working bees on public and private land, property tours, information sessions, and involvement in two significant biolink (wildlife corridor) projects.

One of their flagship efforts is the *Balnarring to the Bay Biolink*, initiated in 2019 through community consultation. Thanks to strong fundraising efforts, all 240 pine trees in Civic Court were removed between July 2020 and April 2021, allowing the area to be fully revegetated with indigenous trees and shrubs. New interpretive signage has been installed opposite Civic Court Reserve, and a Bush Foods Garden has been created in partnership with Willum Warrain, the Bunurong Land Council, Balnarring Preschool and the Mornington Peninsula Shire. The group continues to strengthen habitat connectivity by planting tens of thousands of indigenous plants across the biolink, including a major restoration effort at Saltbush in Balnarring. Through the generosity of the Presentation Sisters, 25 acres of land at Balnarring Beach has been set aside as part of their environmental legacy. Over the past two years, MCCL and more than 300 volunteers have planted 13,000 trees and shrubs on this formerly cleared grazing land, which now forms an integral link within the Balnarring to the Bay Biolink. This work is ongoing, and the site at Saltbush has been permanently protected with a Trust for Nature Covenant.



Becoming a member of the Merricks–Coolart Catchment Landcare Group provides access to sustainable land-management information, free workshops and courses, funding opportunities and a range of volunteering activities. People can get involved as active volunteers or simply support the group through a financial membership. To learn more, visit the [Merricks–Coolart Catchment Landcare Group webpage](#), email the group directly: [mcclandcaregroup@gmail.com](mailto:mcclandcaregroup@gmail.com), or join Merricks Coolart or other MPLN groups via the MP Landcare [“Join a Group”](#) page.

*Chantal Morton – Landcare Facilitator, MPSC*

## Merricks Memories by Di Hall

### Merricks Beach Road names – and where did they come from...

Have you ever wondered how the streets of Merricks Beach got their names? Many reflect early land ownership, local geography, or the seaside aspirations of developers nearly a century ago.

- **Coles Lane / Merricks Beach Road**  
Coles Lane marked the Eastern boundary of land owned by the Coles family. Over time it became known as Merricks Beach Road, a more descriptive, directional name. Merricks itself derives from Meyrick, the name of the first Europeans to take up the original Coolart pastoral run in 1840.
- **Minto** is from the Cole family home, where the Cobb and Co coach stopped after being at Warawee and then continuing on to Shoreham and Flinders. Apparently it was not uncommon for the coach to go by the main homesteads.
- **Palmer’s Hill Road**  
J. Palmer was an early selector—someone who took advantage of the Lands Acts of the 1860s. These Acts were designed to break up large pastoral holdings by allowing individuals to lease and eventually purchase smaller parcels of Crown land for farming. Palmer’s name appeared on three adjoining lots in this area on early maps. Although he never developed the land and later sold it, his name lived on in the area’s most prominent feature: the highest point of the bluff, known as Palmer’s Bluff or Palmer’s Hill. The road name likely followed common local usage.
- **Surf, Wave, Spray, Foam and Bayview**  
These evocative street names date from 1926, when the land was subdivided and actively marketed as a seaside resort. The names were clearly chosen to highlight the coastal lifestyle and appeal to holidaymakers.
- **Cliff Road and Bluff Road**  
These names are purely descriptive, reflecting the local geography and prominent landforms.
- **Kingswood Court**  
The origin of this name remains something of a mystery. It may have been chosen for its traditional English associations, suggesting history, greenery, or prestige. If anyone knows its true story, I would love to hear from you.

*Di Hall – MBRA Secretary*