



MERRICKS BEACH RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION INC.

2017 Committee Report

In some respects, 2017 might be thought to have been a 'business as usual' kind of year for the MBRA committee. But an assessment in those terms would both undervalue considerably the extent of the events and activities in which the committee's members have been engaged this year, and also fail to recognise a number of very significant nascent issues to which we have, and will continue to, respond.

It has now been a full year since the installation of the 5 traffic calming measures in Merricks Beach. There will be many different views as to whether they are successful. Plainly, they are not perfect. Of course, the Shire could have spent more money to make the concrete curbs flush, and yes, there may be some drainage issues yet to resolve, and sure, the contractor's maintenance schedule is still a work in progress (although some say that the potholes within the chicanes are a positive attribute!), but they represent the only response that it has been possible to make to the no. 1 concern of most residents, namely excessive traffic speed. This, therefore, is as good as it can get. We look forward to hearing the views of the members at the AGM.

Possibly the no. 2 issue for residents is rabbits. We will never know for sure the real impact of the MBRA's 2016 rabbit reduction program, but it seems clear that, on the back of that program, the release of the new calicivirus in March 2017 has resulted in a fairly significant decrease in rabbit numbers. But the war must continue, lest we be overrun again. Suggestions as to how residents can play their part are contained in an article in the current edition of *Merricks Matters*. The MBRA committee remains hopeful that other community groups in Merricks Beach will also take action to reduce rabbit burrows in the areas for which they are responsible.

One of the potentially significant issues with which the MBRA committee was concerned in 2017 was the changes to planning laws made early in the year by the State government. Whilst it currently appears that the worst fears of some have not been realised, this was a loud wake up call for everyone who loves the Mornington Peninsula; constant vigilance is required when it comes to planning – there is no shortage of developers who would gleefully pave everything from South Frankston to Cape Schanck, and there is never any guarantee that some short-sighted planning minister will not try to let them. As it was, an enormous positive to come from the response to the planning law changes that *were* made was the community solidarity against inappropriate planning that was on display this year, including in particular from the councillors and the Shire's own planning department. This was reassuring, to say the least.

The MBRA committee has been quietly progressing plans for two major projects in the village. The first is the proposed renovation of the tennis courts. A paper concerning that proposal has been provided to members separately and is on the agenda for the AGM.

The second is work on the drains in a number of locations, particularly Wave Street and the lower reaches of Bayview Road. The shire's contractor has agreed to undertake drainage

works in Wave Street, and these should be completed shortly. Bayview (and other areas) are problematic because the primary cause of drainage disfunction is blocked, damaged or non-existent cross-overs, and the shire regards these as the individual residents' responsibility. The MBRA is seeking ways in which to 'encourage' the relevant residents to remediate their cross-overs by minimising the financial pain for them, but ultimately this work will simply have to be done, in the interests of the entire community.

Apart from these matters, there were many other things done by the committee in 2017 to deliver on the MBRA's objectives, and the priorities of members, as established by the 2015 residents' survey. These included:

- the annual plant giveaway on the Queen's Birthday weekend, once again benefitting enormously from the generous assistance of Richard Anderson, from Merricks Nursery (on Frankston Flinders Road);
- a very successful inaugural function for new residents of Merricks Beach;
- three fabulous editions of *Merricks Matters*;
- creation of a brochure for new residents, to introduce them to the various community organisations;
- funding and co-ordinating roads maintenance (to supplement the Shire contractor's program)
- production of the third iteration of a Merricks Beach 'community calendar' (jointly funded by MYC).

In addition, the committee has been planning for the summer holiday season, with the annual sand modelling competition and sausage sizzle set for 6 January, the 'Davies Cup' tennis tournament to be held, in conjunction with MYC, on 29 December and, for the second time, a function for new residents of Merricks Beach, to be held on 27 December.

As readers will have noted, the current edition of *Merricks Matters* was the last under the editorship of Gai Wilson. Gai decided early in the year to hang up her blue pencil (actually, she tried to do it last year, but we talked her out of it!) after 7 years of dedicated and elegant work, and the rest of the committee, and all MBRA members, owe her tremendous thanks, which we will be able to express further in person at the AGM. Welcome to Madeleine Curtain, who has agreed to take up this venerable role from 2018.

Finally, big thanks on behalf of the entire Merricks Beach community, whom they selflessly serve, to each member of the committee for their contributions throughout the year. Particular thanks to Kathy Clarke, secretary, and Greg Sutherland, treasurer, who keep the MBRA running smoothly and solvently (respectively). Special thanks also to Bernard Barrett, who bears more than just his title of 'Roads & Drains' with such great fortitude and with enormous dedication to the welfare of our wonderful little village.

I hope to see you at the MBRA's annual general meeting, on Sunday 7 January at 10am, at the yacht club.

Peter Cash
President

11 December 2017