

Merricks Matters

Autumn 2019

Calendar of Community Events

Saturday 20th April, 7pm – MYC Easter BBQ

Sunday 21st April, 3pm – Easter egg painting and hunt in the Park, Bill Carroll Reserve

Saturday 18th May, 3pm – Merricks Yacht Club AGM

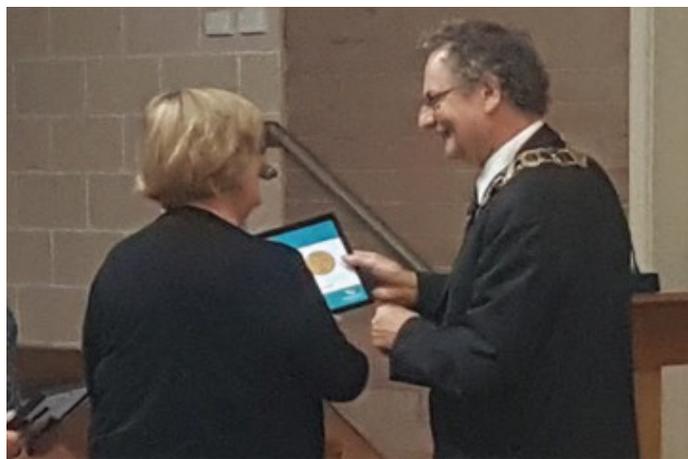
Saturday 18th May, 6:30pm – Presentation Dinner

New Website

Announcing our new Merricks Beach Residents' Association website which went live last week. mbra.com.au (please note this brand new address). Thank you to Annthea Hick and Rachel Rowe who have worked many long hours over the last 6 months, particularly over the Christmas holidays, to get this up and running. Thank you too to Kathy Clarke for her guidance in the process. We hope you will enjoy its new format and fresh appeal. If anyone has any feedback, comments or suggestions please use the website's contact us page to send them through to Madeleine Curtain.

Congratulations Sue Rutley

On Tuesday 26 March 2019, at Balnarring Community Hall, Sue Rutley was awarded a Mayoral Commendation from the Mornington Peninsula Shire. The Merricks Beach Residents' Association was asked to nominate a person they felt had shown outstanding service and commitment as a volunteer in the community and they unanimously resolved to nominate Sue.



Born in Coburg, Sue's parents started holidaying with relatives in Minto Street in 1938. The family purchased their own property in 1954. A Life Member of MYC, Sue has sailed here since she was a 10 year old. It started with her families little fishing boat but she soon became and has remained a dinghy sailor.

Sue worked for 30 plus years at the Commonwealth Bank in Melbourne but was too busy doing sports to marry. Sue would sail in Summer, play hockey in Winter and swim in between. Every year she would travel overseas, with Norway her favourite destination, but she always looked forward to getting back to Merricks.

Making the permanent move here 19 years ago, she started teaching swimming at Crib Point outdoor pool and then Hastings. She taught all ages but really enjoyed teaching children at the after school program. With a significant birthday last September she decided it was time to hang up the bathers!

Thursday night drinks & nibbles at the yacht Club was born 14 years ago after Sue had finished cleaning the yacht club and stopped for a cup of tea to admire the view. She decided more people needed to see this stunning view and Thursday was the only night she didn't work as a swimming teacher. So word quickly spread and the Thursdays went from being a Summer activity to being an all year round locals night enjoyed by some 30 - 60 residents on a regular basis.

Sue's voluntary contribution to Merricks Beach has spanned 50 years and the community has benefitted from her involvement organising sailing and swimming lessons for children, social functions, fundraising, judging the long running sand modelling contest and especially her visits to the sick and lonely. Sue loves Merricks Beach but hasn't decided if it is Paradise or Heaven yet. You will often bump into Sue with her wombat Magness in tow, or tending to a family of goats. Sue's award recognises her as "being the heart and soul of the Merricks Beach community and being instrumental in bringing people together."

Farewell Andy Czerkaski

Regrettably, Merricks Beach has recently lost one of its most colourful and lovable characters, Andy Czerkaski.

Andy had a tough past and at the age of 9 years he helped his family escape war- torn Poland and migrated to Australia, initially settling in Wacol in Queensland, and later to Melbourne where he became an Electrical Engineer and headed up the Melbourne City Council Electricity Supply. From Apprentice to General Manager his career spanned some 45 years, pre-privatisation he was responsible for the smooth running of supplying all the power to greater Melbourne. He especially loved the 8 large coal fired power stations located in the heart of Melbourne, which provided DC power to all the city's Trams and Building lifts.

Andy, wife Liz and their family of four have been coming to Merricks Beach for the past 45 years. Initially staying with friends and family here. In 1994, following his retirement, Andy purchased what was originally known as “Barnsies” in Spray Street. The family all loved Merricks Beach especially Andy who loved spear fishing for crays and snorkelling.

In 2012 Andy sold up in Melbourne to retire permanently down at Merricks to look after Liz who required 24/7 care. Shortly after, Liz passed. Whilst moving house Andy suffered a stroke which affected his speech, so one of his neighbours used to visit him every Friday night to solve the world’s problems over some “hydration”. These nights became a tradition and Andy’s speech did improve. He loved Merricks and his Happy hour

He will be missed by many.

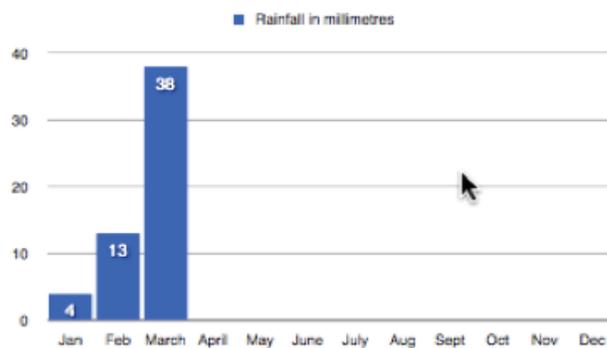


A dry start to the year

It has been a very dry start to Autumn with pretty extreme conditions for planting. The little rainfall we have had for the start of the year has made for very dry soil and gardens in the village. “Climate change is really happening” according to Richard Anderson from the Merricks Nursery. Richard’s advice is that “any planting should be left until early Winter.” He suggests “mulching very well when planting and making sure to have a significant amount of water for each plant- possibly up to 20 litres. There are no guarantees of the rain improving, but planting indigenous plants will give a more hardy proposition.”

Here are the rainfall figures for the year so far. This shows we’ve received only around half of the rainfall for the first 3 months of this year as compared to last year and this follows a drier than normal spring last year!

Monthly Rainfall at Merricks Nursery 2019



Month	Rainfall in mm 2019	Cummul	Rainfall in mm 2018	Cummul	2017 mm	Cummul
Jan	4	4	51	51	38	38
Feb	13	17	10	61	90	128
March	38	55	41	102	54	182
April			29	131	84	266
May			110	241	73	339
June			73	314	35	374
July			83	397	81	455
Aug			83	480	117	572
Sept			48	528	125	697
Oct			38	566	66	763
Nov			66	632	56	819
Dec			73	705	101	920
	Total for 2019:		Total for 2018: 705		Total for 2017: 920	

Mornington Peninsula Council Dog Management

Concerns have been raised by residents of various local communities, including Merricks Beach, in response to a rumour that the Shire plans to ban dogs altogether on most Peninsula beaches. While there will always be different views regarding any such move, if true, it will be important that the interests of the village as a whole are taken into account. For example, if part of Merricks Beach were to be designated as a ‘dog beach’, residents could expect to see a significant increase in the number of dogs, and also the number of cars bringing them here.

The MBRA has been unable to verify this rumour, or even to obtain any details of the policy review on leash free and dog prohibited areas which MPSC is reportedly undertaking. It is seeking more information.

What is known is that MPSC has been negotiating with the State government (DELWP) to assume responsibility for enforcement of the existing bylaws on all Peninsula beaches, including Merricks Beach. If this does occur, council officers will, for the first time, patrol our beach (and also the village) with the legal power to issue fines for dogs that are not on a lead or do not have a registration tag.

Frankston-Flinders Road

Many members have expressed to the MBRA their concern regarding the consequences of the 100kmh speed limit on Frankston-Flinders Road on the already dangerous intersection with Merricks Beach Road. This has been raised with the Shire Council - including with the mayor at the last AGM - but this is to no avail because Frankston-Flinders Road is under the control of VicRoads, not MPSC. Therefore, as foreshadowed at the AGM, the MBRA is sponsoring a letter-writing campaign. Hopefully, this will prompt VicRoads to take the simple step of reducing the speed limit in this section of road, and a tragedy will not then occur.

If you share this concern, please take a moment to send an email to VicRoads at MSE_Transport.SafeRoadUser@roads.vic.gov.au and copy TrafficRequests@mornpen.vic.gov.au.

Please also copy me at president@mbra.com.au. A copy of the email I have sent is available on the MBRA website at this link.

Peter Cash, President, MBRA

Lionel Lauch's guided walks

Living Culture (Lionel Lauch) is a not for profit organisation on Mornington Peninsula which, amongst other things, provides leisurely guided walks and talks, sharing knowledge of traditional Indigenous bush tucker and medicinal plants. These walks aim to empower and educate people about the importance of keeping the aboriginal culture alive. Recent walks have shown participants the Balnarring foreshore in a whole new light, and have been enthusiastically received.

The MBRA has therefore arranged with Lionel to undertake a guided walk in the Merricks Beach foreshore on Saturday, 31 August from 10am. The walk will take about 2 hours, including a Yidaki (didgeridoo) meditation. The cost will be \$20 for adults and \$10 concession.

Please register your interest on the Contact Us page at mbra.com.au

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

Update from the Merricks Yacht Club

It was another wonderful summer at the yacht club that passed by all too quickly. Sailors had a wonderful season and enjoyed the competition both within Merricks and sailing against other clubs around Westernport. There are more boats than ever in the yard. It is interesting to note that the sailing season lasts nearly six months with around 36 sailing days each season. Each of the social events was a sellout. The regular Thursday night social gathering that takes place throughout the year continues to grow in numbers and newcomers are most welcome to attend. You don't need to be a sailor! All of the sailing and social events are run by an incredible crowd of volunteers who do an amazing job of maintaining the club, ensuring the sailing is safe and lots of laughs by a diverse group of all ages in the clubhouse.

Megan Basser

Update from The Bill Carroll Reserve

The Bill Carroll Reserve is very very dry, as is all of Merricks Beach. March rainfall was 35 mls total, with most of it falling in the last few weekends of March. Some precious plants that are hidden off the main pathways are lovingly hand watered by Glythyn and have survived since their planting in October - we rejoice in their survival! Two tawny Frogmouths supervised our March meeting from a nearby tree. Later in the day they were still there, possibly unobserved by the makers of quite an elaborate cubby at the base of the tree. Look up and listen!

- > Our next task is to tidy up the grasses, and weeding. The Shire is providing a variety of plants which will be ready for planting at the end of May, so watch out for our Working Bee notices.
- > Our application to Bendigo Bank for funding to cover our public liability insurance was successful. Its logo will adorn our various notices and events.
- > We are working towards holding flora and fauna educational events and will keep you posted.
- > Raffle: Kathy Clarke and Lindsay Sutherland were the lucky winners of Ian Jeffrey's beautiful turned wooden bowls.
- > Easter egg painting and races will be held in the reserve on 21 April at 3pm. All welcome.



News from the Foreshore Committee

Autumn is a good time to do maintenance work at Merricks, and the Foreshore Reserve is no exception. We have recently had some potentially dangerous trees lopped near the Yacht Club and the CFA has brought its truck down the fire track and trimmed back branches to ensure there is adequate clearance. Committee members and other volunteers have been moving the cut branches, working on removing weeds like polygala and pittosporum, and protecting revegetation areas. We'll continue this work over the school holiday period, so please talk to us if you're interested in helping out.

We will shortly be starting on a major project to rebuild the surfers' steps, which are showing their age and might not be as safe as we would like them to be. Our contractor will try to minimise disruption, but it will be necessary to close the steps during some of the work. Please be patient with this and use an alternative beach access path in the meantime.

The Committee has also been able to engage former Point Leo ranger Raf to continue working with us, and a new ranger from Point Leo will be starting soon, working a day a week on the Merricks Beach Foreshore Reserve. Raf is a very experienced bush regeneration specialist and we are very fortunate to have him working with us. Likewise, we are extremely appreciative of the Point Leo Foreshore Committee for donating the time of their ranger and helping us out with other tasks too.

You might also see a ranger from Balnarring on the beach during the school holidays. The Committee has authorised Balnarring to conduct dog patrols for us during this period, so please be aware of the regulations and follow any directions from the ranger. Again, thanks to the Balnarring Parks and Foreshore Committee for donating the time of their ranger to undertake this role.

The Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning and the Mornington Peninsula Shire Council have advised us they are planning to expand the fines-based approach the Shire has been using in other areas of the Peninsula, to beaches managed by Committees of Management and Parks Victoria, and that they hope to commence this by Easter. At present, we are not sure of the implications for Merricks Beach, but please note that Council officers have the power to issue on-the-spot fines for non-compliance with regulations.

Joyce Lawrence
Secretary, Merricks Beach Foreshore Reserve Committee

