

Merricks Matters

Spring 2024

Welcome to the third edition of Merricks Matters for 2024. I hope you enjoy it.

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 two lovely Merricks Beach gardens and the families that look after them; and there's a new section called Community Corner, kindly put together by Di Hall.

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

Hope you are enjoying the start of the warmer weather and the lead up to Xmas and Summer!

Joyce Lawrence, Editor

MBRA Update

Frankston-Flinders Road Intersection

The MBRA has continued to make representations in support both of the introduction of double lines adjacent to the Merricks Beach Road intersection and a reduction to the speed limit in that section of Frankston-Flinders Road. This included attending a site meeting in September, which was also attended by representatives of the Department of Transport and Mornington Peninsula Shire Council, an adviser to the Minister for Roads and Road Safety and Paul Mercurio MP. Despite these efforts, and what we thought to have been a very positive discussion on-site, in late-October the MBRA was informed by Paul Mercurio's office that it remains the view of the Department, and therefore of the Minister, that there is no need for double lines at our intersection. Needless to say, this is extremely disappointing and beyond difficult to understand. The MBRA has invited Paul Mercurio to attend our next AGM to explain the Victorian Government's position in this regard. In the meantime, residents who wish to do so are encouraged to express their opinions on the matter to the minister at melissa.horne@parliament.vic.gov.au.

A decision regarding any changes to the speed limits along Frankston-Flinders Road is now expected in December.

MBRA special general meeting(s)

Thank you to all of the members who attended the MBRA's special general meeting held on 3 November 2024. The purpose of the meeting was to consider and vote upon a special resolution to make various amendments to the Rules of the MBRA. Following

discussion, a vote was taken and as the motion did not receive the required 75% majority, it was not passed.

At its meeting held immediately following the general meeting, the MBRA committee resolved to ask members to consider an alternative motion to amend the Rules at a further special general meeting, which will be held at 10am on 1 December 2024. The amendments now proposed do not include those which had proved to be controversial, namely the abolition of proxies and a reduction to the size of the committee. All members who are able are urged to attend the meeting on 1 December 2024 or, if they are unable, to provide a proxy. Notice of the meeting, with full details, will be sent to members soon.

Peter Cash – MBRA President

Davies Cup 2024

The sun is starting to shine so it must be time to pull out the racquet, wrest the tennis balls away from the dog and get some practice in because the annual Merricks Beach tennis 'tournament', the Davies Cup, is almost upon us! All Merricks Beach residents and their guests are welcome to take their shot at winning the trophy and the bragging rights (and prizes) that go with it. For those who have not played before, the format is doubles, with partners arranged by the organisers using a unique, if somewhat haphazard, handicapping system. So anyone can win!

Details - Friday 27 December 2024, commencing 9.45am until about 3.00pm

Cost - \$20 adults; \$10 juniors

Entries – email to president@mbra.com.au or text 0416 067 377.

Peter Cash – MBRA President

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

17 th November, 10am	MBRA working bee, tennis courts. Bring gardening tools/wheelbarrow
1 st December, 10am	MBRA Special General Meeting, Yacht Club
27 th December, 9.45am	Davies Cup Tennis Competition, tennis courts
29 th December, 10am	MBRA AGM, Yacht Club
5 th January, 10am	Sand Modelling Competition, followed by MBRA sausage sizzle, MYC
18 th January, 5pm	Picnic in the Park, Bill Carroll Reserve
20 th April, 3pm	Easter in the Park, Bill Carroll Reserve

Merricks Beach Sand Modelling Competition

The annual Sand Modelling competition will be held on Sunday 5th January at 10.00am. Please put this date in your diary and join us on the beach to enjoy the morning followed by a sausage sizzle held at the Merricks Yacht Club.

Some of the models from previous years to get you inspired.....



Di Hall – MBRA Committee member

Update from MBRA Stormwater Working Group

Just a heads up to impacted residents that the civil contractor will commence in coming weeks to cut drains and install crossovers across the village as agreed with participating residents. The works include large sections of Wave St South and Bayview Rd around the Spray St intersection as well as a few localised crossovers across the village. The MBRA and no doubt residents are looking forward to getting this work completed after much work in the background to arrange and enable.

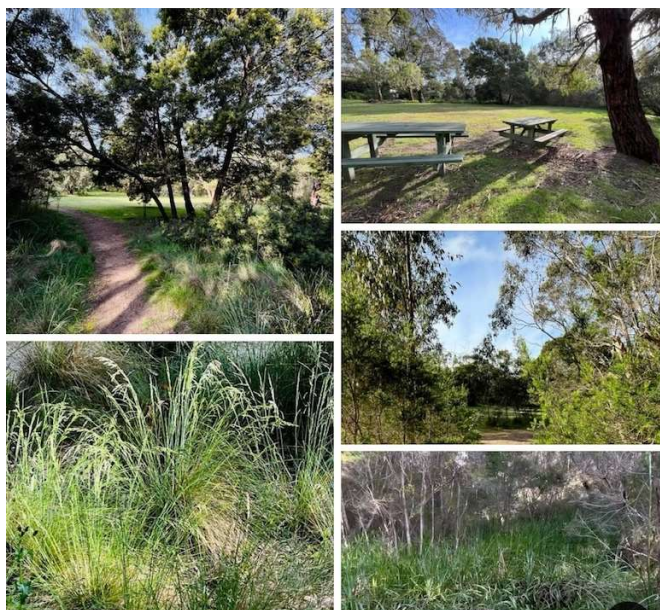
We are also hoping to shortly finalise a Melbourne Water and Balnarring Community Bank grant allocation which will enable engagement of a stormwater consultant to develop the stormwater strategy including identification of high impact pilot projects, so keep an eye out over the Summer for community consultation sessions where you can share your views.

Kriston Symons – MBRA Vice President

Friends of Bill Carroll Reserve

The Friends of Bill Carroll Reserve met on 3 November to hold their AGM and plan the year ahead. A small band of comrades have helped in maintaining and managing the reserve for years. In recent times, the Mornington Shire has taken over much of the heavy lifting for us – the mowing, weed management and tree maintenance. There are also plans to install a vehicle access crossing and foot crossover.

The reserve is a peaceful pause, a habitat for wildlife and local plants. We would welcome new Friends to join us.



Lainie Larsson - FOBCR

Foreshore Committee Update

Maintenance of access tracks

With funding provided by a recent State Government grant, we have extended the handrails on the 'Cave Steps' access track. This is part of our ongoing program to maintain the access tracks in the reserve. There have also been considerable works to remove and address fallen and dangerous trees, particularly as a result of the recent storms and high winds. This work is ongoing, and we appreciate your cooperation when we need to (occasionally) close tracks temporarily to enable works to proceed safely. The recently fallen tree in the foreshore reserve opposite the tennis courts has opened up an area that is soon to be fenced off and replanted, mostly with endemic wildflower/orchid/grasses to re-establish these plants in the reserve, in an area that can be easily viewed by walkers and visitors.

Dune erosion

Many will have observed the general erosion along our foreshore with the retreat of a number of dunes. Quite noticeable has been the erosion at the bottom of the 'Pine Slide' track, the beach access track at the eastern end of Cliff Rd. Significant erosion has been occurring at this location for some time, particularly in the Winter months when high tides and storm activity are more prevalent. In conjunction with the Balnarring foreshore committee we have realigned the final section of the access track and fenced off sections of the dunes in response to the erosion. An additional high tide access path has been provided as a temporary measure. The condition of the old timber seawall and the groyne in this location have been assessed and are expected to be made safer in the near future. In the meantime, take care when walking through this area.

Recently the erosion at the bottom of the 'Pine Slide' track has exposed a concrete structure which has been identified as a sewer inspection pit. South East Water, DEECA (the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action) and our Shire Council are aware of the issue. Their initial assessment is that the exposure of the inspection pit does not pose any current risk. We will keep you updated on any developments.

Beach clean up events

We thank everyone who regularly picks up rubbish on the foreshore. We started our regular Summer beach clean up events from Sunday 4 November. These are typically held on the first Sunday of the month, and more regularly over the holiday season. When the events are on, please visit us at the bottom of Merricks Beach Rd from 8.30am until about 9.30am, to complete the sign up form. Signing the form provides proof of your support and is submitted as part of a funding request that is used to maintain and improve the reserve. You can also drop by to chat to members of the committee about other events and activities we are conducting. Signs are posted at key road intersections to provide details on the relevant weekends, and details included on our Facebook and Instagram pages.

Wildlife in the foreshore reserve

We have had great success in capturing our precious wildlife on camera. Swamp Wallabies have been positively identified in many areas of the reserve, and we think that the photo below could be a mother wallaby with a joey in her pouch!



A range of other wildlife species have also been spotted. Below are photos of a blue wren and a blue tongue lizard. Follow us on Facebook or Instagram to see more wildlife photos <https://www.facebook.com/merricksbeachforeshore/> https://instagram.com/merricksbeach_fc?igshid=YmMyMTA2M2Y=



Regulation of dogs on beaches

With the updated regulations in place for some time now, dog walkers have been enjoying extended time with their dogs (on leashes) on the beach:

- an additional 3 months of access for dogs on leashes (Oct, Nov and March); with access now being restricted only in the Summer months (Dec-Jan- Feb) rather than aligned to daylight savings months
- extended time allowed on the beach for dogs on leashes during the Summer months (Dec-Jan-Feb) by two hours (dogs on leash allowed until 10am and after 6pm).

This aligns with neighbouring foreshore beaches. Shire council assistance to inform the community to act within the regulations will continue. It is anticipated the council officers will be transitioning from an information and education approach to information and enforcement commencing from mid-December 2024 which will align with neighbouring foreshore beaches. We will provide additional details when available from the shire council.

Weeds

Considerable effort is being made to control weeds throughout the foreshore in an effort to retain the natural beauty of our local environment. Notable among the weeds we are trying to control are onion weed, forget-me-nots, agapanthus, watsonia, English ivy, polygala, arum lilies, blackberry, scotch thistle and of course sweet pittosporum. We ask that residents, particularly those whose properties are near the foreshore reserve, consider plantings which do not include any of these species for their gardens. Between wind, rain and birds, seeds can be spread considerable distances, and as the old saying goes 'One year of seeds, seven years of weeds'.

Planting working bees

With the fantastic support of the community, planting and weeding working bees were held in July and October to continue revegetation of the foreshore reserve along Cliff Rd. A couple of photos are included below. More planting working bees are planned for 2025, when planting season starts again. Keep an eye out for event details on the community notice board at the tennis courts and on our Facebook and Instagram pages.



Merricks Beach Foreshore Reserve Committee of Management

Merricks Yacht Club Matters

The New Shed!

Bombshell or bomb shelter? No, it is marvellous!



Created under the steady hand and steely eye of the Immediate Past Commodore Peter Balka, "The Shed" is a tremendous addition to the club this year. Fitting in the two rescue boats and the tractor, there's now space under the clubhouse for kids' activities, extra lockers, sail storage and a more amenable area has been created for briefings. Also, there's a big safety plus with less tractor activity in front of the clubhouse.

Peter will be running 'Shed tours' during the season, for bookings go to 'Pete's Remarkable Shed Tours', seniors' discounts available, tea and coffee provided.

But this season is not all about the shed or the application for EGMs (electronic gaming machines)*.

Social Events at the Club

We have a wonderful setting open to the whole Merricks community. So come and join us for a beer, wine or soft drink and watch the sun go down at Thursday night drinks (we welcome visits from non-members). Some new events this year are a Mexican Fiesta and a Burger Night with the traditional Quiz and Paella Night in the mix (although they sell out, so members are encouraged to book early), and more announcements along the way. With the women's weekly craft mornings, and pilates, as well as the blokes' Friday morning working bees, there is heaps happening!

The 24/25 Season Programme is available on the MYC website <https://www.revolutionise.com.au/merricks/sailing/myc-programme-2024-2025>

The 24/25 season promises to be a beauty with fantastic on-water and social events. This season we're encouraging the greater Merricks community to get involved in the club.

The Sailing Programme provides all the usual club racing with some added fun activities e.g. Cruise & cricket match on Middle Bank and New Years Day relay race, 'Where's My Chicken!'

Exciting Westernport combined Club events are on offer with Teams' Racing at WPYC, Junior overnight cruise to Flinders, the ever-growing Montalto Marathon and the Westernport Challenge, which Merricks is hosting this season.

Diversity

This season we're encouraging greater female involvement in the club. Karen Buckingham has taken on the role as a coordinator, working with Rosemary Nolan, Nish Langford and Sarah Porritt to connect and involve female members of the club and even the broader Merricks community.

It not just about sailing, there's great social activities Karen's lining up and we'll keep you posted with what's happening.

There's a lot to look forward to this season, we welcome everyone to be become involved in the club, there are wide range of membership options. If you'd like to discuss being involved or have any queries, please don't hesitate to call us or come down to the club and have a chat.

Simon Corden – Commodore, MYC

[*Editor's note: We presume the reference to EGMs is in jest. Otherwise, standby for some vigorous community discussions!]

Merricks Beach Garden Focus

For this edition, MBRA Committee members Di Hall and Angela Richards have been visiting some well-established gardens at Merricks Beach and talking with their owners. Thank you to everyone involved for sharing your stories and photos. Please let Di or Angela know if you'd like your garden featured next time!

The Varey Family: A Legacy at Merricks Beach

The Varey family name has long been a familiar one at Merricks Beach, with roots tracing back to 1937 when a 14-year-old Alan Varey first arrived in the area. Over the decades, the original house was replaced by a new home, which Alan and his wife Betty made their permanent residence in retirement. Together, they shared many happy years here until their passing.

In a fitting continuation of the Varey family legacy, their son Doug and his wife Sue purchased the house and took on the rewarding task of renovating both the home and garden. In 2020, Doug and Sue retired from full-time work and made Merricks Beach their permanent home at 77 Merricks Beach Road.

Sue's approach to the garden is inspired by her deep respect for nature, particularly bees. She believes in providing them with the variety they need to thrive, and her garden beautifully reflects this philosophy. The lush, cottage-style garden is an inviting mix of native plants such as correas, callistemons, banksias, and grevilleas. It also boasts an array of fruit trees—lemon, orange, mandarin, and plum—as well as a thriving herb garden with sage, rosemary, parsley, thyme, and bay trees. Many birds visit too, King Parrots, Kookaburras, Wattle Birds, Eastern Spinebills and Rosellas.



Beyond the garden, Sue and Doug are integral members of the community. Doug has served as commodore of the yacht club, while Sue is on the social committee and often works in the control tower on race days. Always eager to lend a hand, they are often the first to arrive when a neighbour's gum tree drops a branch, working together to clear away the debris. Whether they are tending their garden or taking on new projects, Sue and Doug embody the spirit of generosity and togetherness that makes Merricks Beach so special.

The Lawrence Family

The Lawrence family has been holidaying at 8 Surf St Merricks Beach since 1960. Carole and Keith decided that they would love to build and retire to Merricks Beach after purchasing the family home from Keith's father. With the house completed they started to establish their dream home and garden in 2004.

Carole and Keith commenced their garden by removing 5 enormous pine trees to take advantage of the generous backyard. Like many houses at Merricks Beach, the garden had to be self-sufficient. The base rule was to flourish without the use of their precious tank water, with heavy clay being another consideration for planting.

20 years on, today you walk out into a gorgeous sunny garden oasis.



The walkway is shaded with ornamental grapes and wistaria. The lush green lawns are surrounded by fragrant blooming roses, both yellow and white, with irises, herbs, lemon and lime trees all covered in fruit. Walking along curved narrow gravel paths, through to hidden shady nooks. All abundant with shrubs of varying greens, mints, oregano, rosemary both tall and prostrate, succulents at the border's edges leading to vegetable gardens and potting sheds at the back. The bees are so busy with all the flowers.... lavenders, echiums, pink and white valerians, columbines and beautiful soft pink oriental poppies. Both olive and fruit trees provide a backdrop to the garden at the back of the block.

A long, dense extended edge of "Wilderness White" callistemons is in full flush of flowers, an absolute favourite of both Carole and the bees. This hedge blooms 3 or 4 times a year, giving such joy and privacy. To keep your bowl straight and true there are 2 Silver Birch trees at the end of the pitch. The family cricket pitch, a lush green lawned area has provided years of entertainment, bordered by a low hedge of Westringia. The old swing is now green with Virginian Ivy climbing up the frame and creating a beautiful arch. Potted

Nandinas edge the garden paths, the two Manna gums did not pass the test of survival, one split and fell to the ground, as did the other after a very wet Winter.



Both Keith and Carole have created such a beautiful space that can be enjoyed by all their family over the year. The end result of all those years of work designing, planting, pruning and maintenance has not only provided such a gorgeous garden, but is such an inspiration to all wishing to test their skills. Keith and Carole are only too happy to share their experience and advice.

And most importantly, on behalf of all your neighbours, a big thank you to Carole and Keith for (not only a sticky beak) sharing your garden and its history.

Di Hall and Angela Richards – MBRA Committee members

Community Corner

I hope you have had time to check out the Trade List on the MBRA website, under the Current News tab [Something broken? Need some help at home? Looking for a reliable local tradesperson? – mbra.com.au](#)

One of the residents in Foam Street was very pleased after calling Max Cameron, the plumber, and said he did a great job and was very neat and tidy. Another in Surf Street used Clean Fire, Wood Heater repairs and would highly recommend their service. If you require a printed copy to be left at your door, please send me a text on 0427 947 662 or pick one up from me at 73 Merricks Beach Road.

A couple of items have recently come to my attention and may be interesting to some members of the community. The first is called Dial-a-Bus, a Mornington Peninsula Shire Council initiative which operates 14 routes across the peninsula with each township having a dedicated day for services. Morning trips collect people from their homes with return trips commencing in the early afternoon. For information and bookings, please phone 5950 1605. Bookings must be made by 10.00am on the business day prior to the day of travel. Cost of travel is \$1.00 each way.

Flinders to Hastings

Monday service

Dial A Bus

Door-to-door service
\$1 each way

Eligible: Residents who are over 65 or have a disability, and their carers.

Passengers will be collected from the footpath at any address within the service area shown above, and transported to any location within the service area, or the closest safe pick-up or drop-off point.

The second item is a joint community care initiative named the Hastings Police Senior Citizens Register. The aim of the register is to promote confidence and secure living among our senior citizens. I know that, at Merricks Beach, we are very committed to looking after our neighbours, but this could be an extra level of security for some.

**HASTINGS POLICE
SENIOR CITIZENS
REGISTER**
(Established August 2000)

**A JOINT COMMUNITY
CARE INITIATIVE BY
THE REGISTER AND
HASTINGS POLICE
FOR THE BENEFIT OF
OUR SENIOR CITIZENS**

TELEPHONE: 0499 910 904
Email: hastingsregister@hotmail.com

Following on from this is a local crime report

We would like to warn Merricks Beach residents and friends to be vigilant as there has been an increase in crime on the Mornington Peninsula and, sadly, Merricks Beach is not immune. According to crimestatistics.vic.gov.au, there has been 10.5% increase in crime on the Peninsula to March 2024.

An occupied house in Merricks Beach was broken into in early September at 1.30am and a vehicle was stolen from the property. A group of five teenagers were captured on camera and the Police believe that they used a scanner to open the front door, get in and start the car and leave opening the powered gates. The stolen car was found dumped in Rosebud and has still not been returned to the owner.

Farm sheds have also been the subject of theft - in one incident in Merricks, thieves' broke windows to gain access to the shed and then stole battery operated tools with their batteries and chargers, chain saws, an angle grinder and brush cutter. The thieves conveniently also stole a wheelbarrow to take everything off the property.

Hastings Police reports that the increase in aggravated burglaries with youth offenders sneaking into homes and stealing keys and then cars so commonly reported in the media is also affecting the local area.

What are the police doing?

As well as responding to crimes as reported, the Frankston and Mornington Peninsula Crime Reduction Teams are targeting the highest risk offenders in the community - many of whom are repeat burglars and car thieves. This includes bail compliance checks, local patrols and referrals to support services.

What can you do?

Hastings Police asks residents to lock doors - offenders when arrested tell police that they check multiple homes until they find one that is unlocked. Consider where you store your car keys and valuables - are they near windows and visible to opportunistic thieves?

Owners of holiday homes are encouraged to ensure their properties are secure when unoccupied.

Keep an eye out for your neighbours and friends - the Merricks Beach community is especially good at this.

Di Hall (diannehall3@bigpond.com) – MBRA Committee member

Other Local Initiatives

Repower Mornington Peninsula

Looking to get your home off gas? Looking to be more sustainable at home? Check out these valuable links for ideas:

Repower Mornington Peninsula is a local organisation dedicated to helping you [Repower Mornington Peninsula | Your Community Decarbonisation Network \(repowermornpen.org.au\)](https://www.repowermornpen.org.au)

The Shire is also providing information

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

Community Battery

At the request of residents, the MBRA has been looking into applying for a grant in the next round of the Victorian Government's Neighbourhood Batteries Program. The first step is to get a consultant to undertake a feasibility study as a requirement for the grant application. If you have experience in this area or are interested in getting involved, please let the MBRA know. And if you want to learn more, have a read at this link:

<https://www.energy.vic.gov.au/grants/neighbourhood-batteries/100-neighbourhood-batteries-program-grants>

Kriston Symons – MBRA Vice President

CFA Community Fireguard

As many readers will know, a group of residents has been actively participating in the CFA's Community Fireguard Program. We finished the series of discussions that comprise this program with a very interesting and informative visit to two group members' properties, to look at what they have put in place for fire protection.

Many thanks to George King and his partner Diana, and Peter and Bronwyn Cass for enabling us to visit your properties; and to the CFA representatives Damien Taylor and Paul Bonnici, who facilitated the sessions.



The CFA Fireguard group discussed what we might do next and Paul suggested we consider running one of the CFA's bushfire safety planning workshop. More information is at [Practical Bushfire Planning Workshop | CFA \(Country Fire Authority\)](https://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/practical-bushfire-planning-workshop).

Any residents not currently on the Fireguard mailing list who are interested in participating in either another series of the Fireguard Program or a fire safety planning workshop, please get in touch with me/the MBRA via contact@mbra.com.au.

Joyce Lawrence – MBRA Committee member

CPR and Defibrillator Training

Watch out for free CPR and Defibrillator training this Summer! To be held at the yacht club, details re date etc to be confirmed. Look out for posters at the community noticeboard and around the neighbourhood. For more information see [Call, Push, Shock - Ambulance Victoria](#). Enquiries to Angelarichardsrn@gmail.com or 0402 108 533.

Angela Richards – MBRA Committee member

MBRA Residents Survey

The last survey of the Merricks Beach community was conducted in 2015 and the MBRA committee believes it is again time to capture the views of our community to gain a better understanding of the current and future areas of focus. We plan to send the survey in the new year. It will be open to all residents of the Merricks Beach community, not just members of the MBRA.

Sarah Lawrence - MBRA Committee member

Merricks Memories

Does anyone remember when Balnarring Beach looked like this?
Not sure of the year...



Kathy Clarke – MBRA Secretary

Letters to the Editor/MBRA

To: The Editor, Merricks Matters

Subject: Proxy voting

I was extremely concerned at this year's MBRA AGM by an apparent attempt by a small group of residents to 'take over' our Association using the tactic of collecting proxy votes to try to influence the outcome of voting. This tactic has the effect of concentrating votes in the hands of just a few people and is totally against the democratic principle of 'one vote, one value'. What can the MBRA do to make sure this doesn't ever happen again? The MBRA should be a forum for open and

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respectful discussion of concerns to residents, where all members' voices count equally.

A Concerned Member of the MBRA

Thank you for raising your concerns, they are shared by many in the MBRA. This tactic is, unfortunately, not uncommon in incorporated associations and other organisations. A variant of it, known as 'branch stacking', has also been a problem for political parties of all types in Australia and has been the subject of several corruption and integrity inquiries.

Different organisations have responded to this issue in different ways, for instance by limiting the number of proxies an individual can hold - this approach is included in rules that apply to Owners Corporations/Body Corporates. Another approach other organisations (such as political parties) have taken has been to expel members who breach ethical guidelines that have been established.

Consumer Affairs Victoria also recognises that proxies can be subject to misuse and says 'a person acting as a proxy must act honestly and in good faith and exercise due care and diligence'. Incorporated associations can also choose to have rules that do not allow for proxies.

The MBRA Committee has discussed the issue and a majority agreed to this latter approach, proposing a rule change to remove the provision for proxy voting, replacing it with provisions for remote participation in meetings. However, as noted earlier in this edition, this proposal didn't achieve the necessary 75% majority to become part of our rules.

Of course, proxies can only be an issue to the extent that members do not attend the meetings themselves, and they are encouraged to do so if at all possible. If you are ever approached to provide your vote to someone else, please carefully consider whether this is in the best interest of the association and if you have any concerns, please raise them with the MBRA Committee.

Joyce Lawrence – Editor Merricks Matters

[Note: Please email your letters (or other contributions) to the Editor, Merricks Matters at contact@mbra.com.au].

