

CEO's Report

Issue 38 – October 2018



White Ribbon banner continues the message

To demonstrate its commitment to the White Ribbon cause, Council has displayed a banner carrying the message 'Bass Coast says no to violence' on a wall of the Cowes Cultural Centre, facing Thompson Avenue. Council has been working with the community members who organised recent White Ribbon tributes for Samantha Fraser to continue their visible stance to end men's violence against women. Council is also a White Ribbon accredited organisation and proud to stand with the community in solidarity towards this cause. The banner will be displayed until White Ribbon Day, which is on Friday, 23 November.



Alice Bradley, a close friend of Sam Fraser's and one of the organisers of the community's tributes, stands by the new banner.

Advocacy continues in the lead up to election

It has been interesting and exciting to see an increased focus on the seat of Bass in the lead up to the State Election. With the extra attention, we are making the most of every opportunity to have our key advocacy priorities heard.

Earlier this year Council revised its Advocacy Priority List, due to many previous priorities being successfully funded such as the Wonthaggi Hospital, Highball Facility and Secondary College. The updated list, which includes new additions such as erosion, tertiary education and pathways, has been distributed to Ministers, Shadow Ministers and elected representatives, and meetings have been held to discuss the importance of these priority projects.

I recently accompanied Deputy Mayor, Cr Brett Tessari and Manager Strategy and Growth, Jodi Kennedy, to meet with the Victorian Treasurer and Minister of Roads and Transport. On the same Day, Cr Larke and Manager Advocacy and Engagement, Christian Stefani, met with Minister for Tourism and Events and the Victorian Tourism Industry Council.

The following day, Mayor, Cr Pamela Rothfield along with Cr Whelan, Cr Fullarton, Manager Sustainable Environment, Deirdre Griepsma, and I met with the Minister for Environment in Cowes to discuss and demonstrate firsthand the effects of erosion in Cowes and Cowes East.

We have also attended private discussions with Shadow Minister for Environment and senior advisors to the Minister for Tourism and Events.

The meetings are pivotal to communicating the community's needs and pushing Bass Coast to the forefront of funding opportunities. I really look forward to seeing things continue to progress and unfold in the lead up to the election and I hope that we can continue to attract commitments towards our advocacy priorities from both sides of government.



Meeting with the Minister for Environment to discuss erosion on site at Cowes East.

The future of education in Bass Coast

Council recently hosted a 'Tertiary Advocacy Forum' designed to explore challenges and opportunities around access to tertiary education for young people in Bass Coast.

The forum was attended by students from Wonthaggi Secondary College, Newhaven College, Council Trainees and young people who have started or deferred from University courses in Melbourne.

Students participated in a two-hour workshop, and then presented to the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and myself on the findings from their workshop.

It was wonderful to hear about the barriers identified which ranged from being able to afford the cost of living in Melbourne, to social isolation when moving away from home and navigating public transport, to leaving family and pets.

Students explored different options that might alleviate some of the challenges. One such option was a University Hub where education providers could deliver courses based on numbers, and where students studying online could access safe and quiet study spaces, reliable Wi-Fi, tuition and peer support.

It was both fascinating and validating to hear that the students identified this as a possible solution, as one of our key advocacy priorities is requesting \$300,000 from the State Government to prepare a business case, which would explore the feasibility of establishing a University Hub model in Wonthaggi.

The model has been successful in similar rural towns around Australia, such as Cooma, NSW, which experienced similar challenges.



Youth from across the shire came together to discuss the opportunities and challenges of pursuing tertiary education.

Keeping Bass Coast Active

It was great to see another successfully run and extensive community engagement process come to a close with the adoption of Council's Active Bass Coast Plan, a ten year Plan which sets the scene for healthy and active environments and services into the future.



The Active Bass Coast Plan was developed through extensive community engagement

Extensive engagement undertaken in March, which included online and paper surveys, multiple pop-up sessions, face to face engagement and Social Media promotions, informed the development of a draft Active Bass Coast Plan, which was endorsed for exhibition in July.

During the exhibition period feedback on the draft Plan was received through letters, face to face engagement, community information sessions and an online Facebook Q&A. The feedback captured during these sessions shaped the final Plan.

The Plan provides strategic direction for the delivery of open space and recreation projects, along with short, medium and long term goals. Objectives of the Plan include developing a diverse network of recreation facilities and open spaces and recommending location specific actions for improving open space and recreation facilities.

It's great to see Council and the community work together to map out what an active Bass Coast will look like in years to come.

Paul Buckley PSM
Chief Executive Officer