

February 2026 Community Update

Welcome to 2026!

I would like to sincerely thank the many volunteers who work tirelessly in our community, who don't always get summer holidays, including members of the CFA, SES, Surf Life Saving Clubs, Marine Search and Rescue units, as well as the incredible community members supporting neighbourhood houses and local food-relief services. We are fortunate to live in such a generous community where so many give back.

2025 was such a busy year on the Bellarine, with several local projects reaching important milestones. These include the completion of upgraded facilities at Wallington Primary School, the commencement of Stage Two works at the North Bellarine Indoor Aquatic Centre, and the release of the final designs for the St Leonards Local Port Area and Pier Redevelopment, following extensive community consultation.

Other highlights include the opening of the Changing Places facility at Ocean Grove Main Beach, providing accessible bathroom and changeroom facilities for locals and visitors, the delivery of a new vessel for the Queenscliff Coast Guard to better support search and rescue operations, and the many grants to support community connection and wellbeing.

Already in 2026, we have seen the introduction of free public transport across Victoria for under 18s. This initiative helps young people stay connected, whether travelling to school, sport, work, or social activities, while easing cost-of-living pressures for families. From the start of the year, weekend travel has also become free for Victorian Senior Card holders, with carers and disability support pensioners joining this initiative from 1 February.

While the new free public transport initiatives provide an important boost for families, young people, seniors and carers, there is still work to be done to better connect our local communities.

In coming weeks, the Bellarine Bus Network Review will commence, exploring ways to enhance public transport across the peninsula.

I look forward to the community having the opportunity to take part, as your experiences will help shape a stronger, more accessible transport system.

Keep an eye out for more information on how to get involved in the Bus Network Review on my website www.alisonmarchantmp.com.au, social media or in our local Bellarine newspapers.

