

December 2025 Community Update

As we come into December, I'd like to firstly wish you all a happy and safe Christmas and holiday season. If you are just starting your Christmas shopping, I encourage you to try and shop local first and support our local businesses. And if you have visitors, take them around our wonderful Bellarine, there's so much to discover right near home.

I also wish to acknowledge that Christmas can be a difficult time for some. If you need any assistance, please don't hesitate to contact my office. There is local food-relief support (Feed Me Bellarine 0422 798 791), free mental health support (Geelong and Queenscliff Mental Health and Wellbeing Local (1800 573 151) and community services such as Orange Door (1800 312 820) or Lifeline (13 11 14) that can provide assistance. I do hope you can enjoy some time relaxing with friends and family, and I look forward to continuing to work hard for you into 2026.

Portarlington Mussel Festival

On the second Saturday of January the annual Portarlington Mussel Festival takes place in Portarlington Park against the backdrop of the stunning coastline.

A great day out for the whole family celebrating local mussels, produce, beer and wine with live music over five main stages all day long.

There will be over 200 market stalls, cooking demonstrations, kids activities, art and photo exhibitions from 9.30am-5pm. For more informative visit www.portmusselfestival.com

Emergency Services Volunteers

I would like to acknowledge and thank all of our volunteers who work tirelessly over the busy summer months, including members of the CFA, SES, Surf Life Saving Clubs and Marine Search and Rescue Units.

Our local emergency service and surf lifesaving teams are powered by volunteers who give countless hours to our community. They prepare for every situation, and their commitment is extraordinary. Over the past few years, we have provided grants for equipment and vehicles so volunteers can continue doing their incredible work.

I am proud to share this year's Volunteer Emergency Services Equipment Program (VESEP) grant recipients across the Bellarine.

This year's VESEP round is the largest round ever, delivering more than \$30 million to support volunteer emergency services across Victoria, ensuring they have all the tools they need.

Bellarine recipients include:

- Wallington CFA receiving funding for a field command vehicle.
- Ocean Grove CFA receiving funding for a BA support vehicle.
- Ocean Grove SLSC receiving funding for equipment including rescue tubes, rescue boards and defibrillators.



- Barwon Heads 13th Beach SLSC receiving funding for a beach patrol trailer, IRB Thundercat and motors.
- Point Lonsdale SLSC receiving funding for a new IRB craft and 10 surf rescue boards.
- Coast Watch Radio & Marine Rescue Squad Inc. receiving funding for a new Isuzu D-Max 4x4.

Congratulations to all recipients and thank you for your tireless work keeping our Bellarine community safe.

