

May 2026

Community Update

Free Public Transport

After free public transport in April, free travel across Victoria will be extended until the end of May. Following this, fares will be reduced to half price for the remainder of the year. Public transport will also remain free for people under 18, and free on weekends for Victorian Seniors Card holders, carers, and Disability Support Pension recipients.

These measures are designed to ease cost-of-living pressures while encouraging more people to make use of our public transport network.

The Bellarine Bus Review, which ran from March to April, gave local residents the opportunity to share their experiences and ideas through an online Engage Victoria survey. I'd like to sincerely thank everyone who took part.

This review forms part of a broader assessment of bus services across the Geelong, Bannockburn, and Bellarine region. Notably, 44% of all responses came from the Bellarine, highlighting how strongly our community cares about improving local transport.

The key priorities identified were:

- More frequent bus services
- Better connections with other transport options
- More direct routes and shorter travel times

The Department of Transport and Planning is now carefully reviewing the feedback from residents and local organisations, which will take some time. I will continue to advocate to the Minister for Public and Active Transport and the Department to ensure the Bellarine receives the improved bus services our community deserves.

Upcoming Events:

Our Bellarine region is also set to take centre stage globally this month, with Ocean Grove Bowling Club hosting the World Bowls Indoor Championships from 11–16 May 2026. With competitors from more than 30 countries, the event will bring elite bowlers and a worldwide audience to the Bellarine. Make sure to book your free ticket to attend and be part of this world-class occasion on our doorstep.

Over winter, there is still plenty to do on the Bellarine. The National Celtic Folk Festival returns from 5–8 June 2026, bringing a vibrant celebration of music, culture and community to Portarlington. The festival features live performances, workshops and interactive experiences, offering something for everyone while also shining a light on local businesses and the broader Bellarine region.

Later in June, Nightide will transform Queenscliff from 19–21 June for its winter solstice celebration. Across three days, the festival presents a range of unique experiences, including its iconic dawn swim, a Solstice Feast, and a spectacular nighttime program featuring live music, fire installations, food trucks and fireworks. The weekend concludes with a free family event, providing a welcoming and relaxed end to the festival.



I am proud that as a government we were able to support these two festivals through the 2025–26 Multicultural Festivals and Events Program and the Regional Events Fund, helping ensure the Bellarine continues to host great events that support local businesses and showcase our region on a national and international stage.

