Read the latest news from Vincentia

FEBRUARY 2026

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Vincentia Ratepayers & Residents Asssociation



Regular Stories from Vincentia

Welcome everyone to our first Newsletter for 2026. This is a busy newsletter covering a range of matters that affect our domain - Bikes and pedestrian issues, dangers in our Jervis Bay waters over the holiday period, rubbish collections & illegal dumping, the changing face of Vincentia with new developments proposed and commenced, the Council's plans to transition

from the CCB model of engagement, and an update on deamalgamation of Vincentia Golf Club from the Country Club.

BIKES AND PEDESTRIANS

Police have reported they receive regular complaints about bike riders especially E-Bikes putting the safety of pedestrians using the shared-pathway along Collingwood Beach at risk.

The following is an extract from the handout provided by Bay & Basin Police 'Understanding E-Bike Rules in NSW':
* The electric motor must cut off when the bicycle reaches 25km/h
* Motors are not to be used as the primary source of propulsion; they are intended to assist when riding uphill or into headwind
* Keep to the left and give way to pedestrians on shared paths or footpaths
* Have and use a bell to warn others of approach
* Mobile phones must be hands free or secured in a phone holder fixed to the bike. It is illegal to text, make video calls, take photos while riding
* It is illegal to ride under the influence of drugs or alcohol

Speed is a problem when sharing paths with pedestrians, but a finite speed limit has not been set. The description provided: "Ride at a speed which is safe for you and those around you"

Police don't normally monitor shared paths but if they have evidence of unsafe behaviour, they can put a post up on their system and if Police officers are in the area, intercept the offender. However, Bay & Basin Police stressed they need a willing victim to report the incident.

When it comes to Council land, the matter is to be handled by Council Rangers. Council recently advised they had received

complaints about bikes in Burton Street Mall and intended to erect signage to prohibit bicycles in the mall.

This received a big reaction, mostly angry. Burton Street Mall is a popular location for bike-rider groups to meet for breakfast, riders stopping off for refreshments and to shop. Although there was recognition that safety was an issue – the risks were mostly attributed to young people indiscriminately riding throttle-driven bikes (Fat Boys). However, banning bikes would deter bike-riders from visiting Burton Street Mall and negatively affect the cafes and shops. VRRA raised these issues with Council, and we were advised Council cannot discriminate between bikes or riders.

After obtaining input from landlords, tenants and users of the mall VRRA lodged a submission to Council disagreeing with their proposal to prohibit bikes, arguing it is the riding of bikes in a pedestrian mall that is the problem. 'Cyclists dismount' and/or 'Pedestrian Mall Foot Traffic only' signage would make it easier for users of the mall to point out to offenders they are prohibited from riding in the mall, and the cyclist can't argue they are unaware.

Our detailed letter can be read by clicking this link:

https://www.vrra.org.au/bikes-in-burton-st-mall/



Happenings in Jervis Bay Waters

The strong winds in January created dangerous situations for users of inflatable StandUp Paddle Boards (SUPs) and caused boats to break off their moorings. One 45’ yacht moored in Vincentia was blown to Calalla. Several rescues were necessary when SUPs were blown out to sea: One girl was rescued by Marine Rescue when too exhausted to get herself back, and two separate groups of SUPs were rescued by a Dolphin Whale Watching boat.

We had some excitement with shark sightings creating fear & trepidation to swim in the Bay - especially after the 4 shark attacks off NSW beaches within 48 hours.

This resulted in a lot of warnings from Surf Life Saving, and Service NSW Gov. Here are the simplest steps to reduce the risk of shark attack:

* Avoid swimming at dawn or dusk, when sharks are more active,

* Avoid swimming in murky or choppy waters, where sharks could mistake you for their prey. (Sharks can see you but you can't see them).

* Stay out of the water with bleeding cuts or wounds.

* Avoid having pets in the water with you.

* Avoid beaches and river mouths after heavy rains where bait fish are attracted followed by sharks.

* Use Apps like Sharksmart to check conditions in your area

It appeared from the influx of heavy vehicles towing JetSkis into Vincentia over December-January that we were going to suffer an unpleasant time.

Fortunately, Water Police and the Boating Safety Officer were active performing surveillance of our beaches and curtailing JetSki behaviour. They couldn't be around to intervene with this inconsiderate JetSki owner creating a safety risk in Burton Street Mall.



Jet Skis are banned in the waters of Booderee National Park, but there is the 'don't care' element who hurtle around creating problems for passive users. They are dangerous especially to Divers and Snorklers underwater because they can't hear them. Read more about boating in the park here.

Watercraft in the Park

Jervis Bay Police Station (AFP) will respond to complaints about JetSkis in Booderee waters and harassment of marine mammals. They have a boat and can go after them (unlike Booderee National Park) Contact Ph: 02 5126-9230

How to report a JetSki problem

RUBBISH - RECYCLING AND ILLEGAL DUMPING

Food Organics and Garden Organics (FOGO)

Shoalhaven Council must provide an organic collection service by 1st July 2030, in accordance with NSW Government Legislative requirements. It will be a weekly collection service - a green bin for food and garden organics.

Council have expressed concern at the practicalities and risk of contamination with toxic materials – based on unhappy experiences with recycling and the yellow recycling bins. Unfortunately, there are people who don't care where they put their rubbish, lacking discernment – disposing of any type of waste that cannot be recycled, into yellow bins. The problem is costly and has required Council to employ people to sort through the collected rubbish and separate what can be recycled and what cannot.

Council have advised they will commence Community Consultation early this year as part of the Waste Strategy.

Shoalhaven is ranked number one in the state for illegal dumping cases. Examples of illegal dumping include:

• Dumping rubbish or green waste in natural areas or on the side of the road.

• Placing unwanted household items on the footpath.

• Businesses or contractors who are paid to correctly dispose of waste but instead dump it on land without proper approvals.

Council is ramping up a campaign to help put a stop to this behaviour. Illegal dumping is trashing our environment. Green waste dumped causes noxious weeds to take hold and dominate our natural bushland, and toxic waste penetrating soil and flowing into our waterways. The Mayor has asked for community support: "If you see illegal dumping, please report it straight away to the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA). They have a simple online form "

Here are a few suggestions VRRA have heard to help deter dumping:

* Extend the period for use of TIP vouchers for longer than 1 year.

* Encourage Landlords and Real Estate Managing Agents to pass TIP vouchers on to tenants to use.

Read more and report dumping here Clean Up Shoalhaven

New Developments are changing the face of Vincentia

We can all see the construction of the new Anglican Church evolving as we pass the roundabout at Wool Road & Naval College Road. Reverend Campbell Mackay reports the project is on track. The new building is intended as a welcoming space for the wider Jervis Bay community. We will get the opportunity to check it out when they hold a community open day, planned for September 2026 - details to be confirmed

Work on a major upgrade to Vincentia High School is underway providing the school with a new two-storey building featuring 16 modern, permanent classrooms, teaching spaces, and new bathroom amenities. The new building will replace virtually all the high school's ageing demountables. The upgrade is budgeted to cost $13M

Prior to 1993 the nearest High School was in Nowra. Vincentia High School was opened in 1993 and as student numbers increased demountable buildings were required

Sue Josephson was the first Principal, responsible for establishing the school, with strong support from the Parents and Citizens Association at the time. Sue advised the school started with Years 7 and 8 in 1993, with 400 students enrolled, and 38 staff. Each year a new teaching year was added

The first Year 12 class was in 1997, with a staff of 83. It was a celebrated occasion when 92 students graduated from Year 12

By 2018 the school had approximately 1000 students enrolled from Year 7 to Year 12, of whom 16 percent identified as Indigenous Australians and five percent were from a language background other than English. The school population was raised as the Bayswood Estate became established around 2015 - 2018 attracting young families to the area. Bayswood also changed the demographic of the area from a predominantly retired population to now include many young families

The upgraded school is scheduled for completion by the beginning of 1st term 2027. Vincentia High School will then have the capacity to accommodate up to 1,300 students to support the future growth of the local community. The expansion of the school since 1993 is a good example of how our population is changing, and the face of Vincentia.



Larger houses and increasing numbers of Dual Occupancy Duplex buildings are being constructed, occupying most of the block of land with little or no space for a tree or a garden.

DA 26/1007 for 2 Barnett Street Vincentia is a prime example: 13 bedrooms with 13 ensuites, described as a “two story dwelling

with basement and rooftop balcony” Questions are being raised on whether this is a ‘dwelling’.

Visit our web site to view recent DA's HERE

The plans can be accessed on the Council’s DA Tracking website. Council promotes the site for community participation in decision making processes that impact individuals and their local community.

How to Access DA information

DA Search Instructions

COUNCIL WANTS TO DISCONTINUE CCBs

The new CEO for Shoalhaven City Council announced in December the intention to disband the Community Consultative Body (CCB) model by 1 July 2026. This is a disappointment to the VRRA as we have just reformed with a new committee after a 6-month suspension without a committee.

The newly formed VRRA lodged a submission to Council stating reform needs to introduce a mechanism for compliance of the existing CCB Guidelines. These were adopted on 26/7/2005 and reviewed 1/12/2024. They can be accessed here CCB Guidelines

This document recognised “Council and the community are faced with the challenging responsibility of accommodating an acceptable and sustainable level of growth, whilst protecting the inherent natural qualities of our area.”

Determining developments that are not at the expense of our natural environment are a source of constant conflict. We argue that CCBs would be more in tune with the natural qualities of our area, and the development needs of their community.

The 23 CCBs in the Shoalhaven wait for the Council to conduct the community consultation they propose for February-March to determine an alternative engagement model.

Report from JBCSC

There is growing optimism and unity around the future of the Jervis Bay Community & Sports Club (JBCSC), with strong community and stakeholder support continuing to build.

Friends of Vincentia Golf Club have formally reaffirmed their full commitment to the venture, bringing valuable advocacy, volunteer energy and grassroots backing. Their support reflects a shared belief in a united pathway forward.

Encouragingly, the Country Club has engaged its solicitor to assist with detailed information regarding the potential transfer of assets as part of the de-amalgamation process. This work will clarify asset condition, upgrade requirements, compliance considerations and associated costs, all critical to understanding the true capital required to recommence operations.

De-amalgamations are complex and can take up to 12 months to complete. Once asset reviews and costings are finalised, JBCSC will be positioned to submit its formal Viability Report, drawing on industry experts and comparable club experience.

Following submission and the required member vote the process moves beyond local control to the Independent Liquor & Gaming Authority (ILGA) for final determination.

While significant work remains, the tone is positive. Community support, professional cooperation and structured process are

creating strong foundations for a sustainable, inclusive future “up the hill.”

Thank you to the community for your patience and belief. Momentum is building and the future is being shaped together.

Up the hill we go.

Craig Hatton Chair JBCSC

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