

A Message from the President

As your newly elected President I look forward to working with the community and key stakeholders (Members of Parliament, MPSC, DSE, SFCoM, CFA, Schools and Camps) to address issues of concern, and protect the uniqueness of our village.

I would like to acknowledge and thank our outgoing committee members for their excellent contribution over the past three years during which much has been achieved. John Hatton who has served the community well as President will continue his involvement as Vice President. Our thanks also go to retiring members Barry Wade (Treasurer), Anthony Sagona and Terry Stephens who have made a significant contribution to the Somers community.

Your new committee elected at the Annual General Meeting held on 23 September is as follows:

Kingsley Culley (President)	Anne Bartholomew (Treasurer)	Denise Kempster (Membership)
John Hatton (Vice-President)	Sarah Ashton	Alasdair Macdonald
Ray McCutcheon (Secretary)	Alan Beanland	Ian Taylor

The SRA membership has increased a remarkable 13% over the past 12 months to more than 650 members. I look forward to further gains as we address the issues raised by the community and continue to offer services such as our electricity initiative that saved our residents many thousands of dollars.

In my view the SRA should represent the total community. In this regard I propose encouraging the Primary School, Pre-school, CFA and SFCoM to nominate representatives to be members of the SRA Committee. We have the capacity within our Rules of Association to be able to include this wider representation as casual appointments.

Current major issues in progress for the SRA include:

Management Plan for the Foreshore	Erosion of the Foreshore
Shared Pathway Project	Extension of electricity initiative to include gas
Improved Broadband service for Somers	Road safety including the store corner
Minimising the fire risk.	Maintenance of the SRA web site

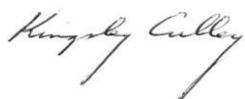
Comment on the status of these major issues is included in this Bulletin.

A draft Management Plan for the foreshore has recently been released by DSE and as this is one of the most important issues facing the community the SRA has arranged with DSE an extension of time for public comment. A separate Discussion Paper on this issue is also included in this Bulletin.

The SRA will again be sponsoring an Open Day in January to enable residents to raise issues of concern with us. We have arranged for representatives from MPSC, CFA, Neighbourhood Energy, SFCoM and DSE to be present for the discussions.

The SRA extends to the Somers community its very best wishes for Christmas and for a safe and happy holiday season.

Kind regards to all



Kingsley Culley
President

A successful AGM

Once again the AGM was strongly supported with the presence of more than 40 members and guests. We were particularly pleased that The Hon. Greg Hunt and Deputy Mayor Cr. Frank Martin were able to attend and to contribute to a lively discussion following the completion of the formal part of the meeting.

Draft Management Plan for the Somers Foreshore

Perhaps the most important issue facing the community at this time is the adoption of a Management Plan for the Somers Foreshore. We thank the Somers Foreshore Committee of Management (SFCoM) for their efforts in developing a draft plan for future management of the Somers Foreshore and we have included with this Bulletin a separate SRA discussion paper covering this important issue. We are keen for the community to have adequate opportunity to review this draft and have arranged with DSE for an extension of time for comments from 30 days to 90 days. This will require all comments to be submitted prior to 31 December 2011. We have also asked the DSE to take into account any issues arising from discussion at our open day in January 2012.

Call for membership

In the last year the SRA has enjoyed its largest annual increase in membership of 13% to more than 650 Members. This is within a village with just 1150 properties (including vacant blocks).

We are encouraged to believe that this is a reflection of our very genuine effort to deliver on our Stated Purpose to "Protect our Village Atmosphere" and to deliver value to our members where ever we can.

Included in this mail-out you will find a membership renewal form and an addressed return envelope. We seek your continuing support throughout 2012. The strength of the SRA is in the number of residents who are members. The cost is just \$10 per person per year.

You may find it more convenient to renew your membership by visiting our website at www.somers.org.au where you can pay the modest fee online.

Open Day 14 January 2012

Your committee has arranged another open day over the holiday period to allow residents to discuss any matters of concern.

The open day will be held on Saturday 14th January 2012 at the R W Stone Hall and we would encourage residents to visit at any time between the hours of 10.00am and 3.00 pm.

We have arranged for the following organisations to be present to ensure that the widest range of issues can be discussed. The open day will be arranged to enable you to either join in on any group discussions that may be running at the time or for one on one consultations as appropriate.

- The Somers Residents Association (SRA)

Raise any matter with the committee that you believe should be pursued with the Shire, or indeed any other level of Government.
- The Mornington Peninsula Shire Council (MPSC)

Officers from the MPSC will be available to discuss the wide range of issues affecting life in the village.
- Neighbourhood Energy (NE)

Bring your last electricity account to the open day and ask NE representatives to explain just how much you could save by signing up to the SRA Electricity Initiative. See further comment below.
- The CFA

Seek advice on the preparation of your personal fire plan or ask about any matter of concern to you about your exposure to fire over the summer season.
- The Somers Foreshore Committee of Management (SFCoM)

Members of the SFCoM together with a representative of the Department Of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) will be in attendance to discuss the management of our foreshore.

Shared Pathway System for Somers

The SRA continues to promote this important project and to seek project financing from the MPSC and the Federal and State Governments. While this funding may take some years to secure we are increasingly confident that we will secure the required funding to complete this strongly supported community project. Our current projection is for a commencement in 2014/15.

The SRA Energy Bulk Purchase Initiatives

We are delighted that hundreds of Somers Residents have availed themselves of the 15% electricity discount and other benefits negotiated by the SRA last year. If you haven't yet taken up this opportunity please visit our website www.somers.org.au where you will find full details of how to make this very simple switch of your electricity retailer.

Next year the SRA will be reviewing the scheme to ensure that we continue to deliver the best possible rates for the community. We are also seeking to involve other communities to gain better leverage through increased numbers.

The SRA is also seeking to negotiate a bulk deal for gas in the village of Somers. This process is well advanced and we look forward to bringing details to you in our next bulletin.

Bushfire Preparedness

Angus Mair, of the Southern Metropolitan Region of the CFA, in a recent address to one of the Somers Probus clubs described the entire Mornington Peninsula as "extreme fire risk" and went so far as to recommend that residents leave Somers for a safer haven on 'Code Red' days if they are not prepared with a detailed Fire Protection Plan. We intend to negotiate with Angus to assist residents prepare their own Fire Emergency Plan. Angus is available for individual discussion of Fire Safety Plans and can be contacted on 0407 518 340.

Broadband Services in Somers

The SRA is very concerned that our Community is poorly serviced with broadband coverage with restricted ADSL coverage and less than adequate 3G wireless coverage. We thank all of you who have lodged your concerns on our website and note that your download speeds are deplorable compared to those enjoyed by people in Melbourne Suburbs. We will use your feedback to lobby for a much improved service. If you haven't yet registered your concerns please visit our website at www.somers.org.au .

Wasps in the Somers Community

We thank the SFCoM for responding to our concerns about wasps on the foreshore. This was highlighted by a very serious attack on one of our residents. Warning signs have now been erected at strategic locations advising how to report wasps. Please note the following:

1. Wasps on private land are the owners' responsibility and should be removed by a Pest Control Contractor.
2. Wasps on Public land should only be reported where the exact location of a nest is known as wasps can travel a considerable distance from their nest. Please contact the Shire on 1300 850 600
3. A free telephone service is available from the DSE on 136186 where you can obtain information on sting treatment, control and identification etc. Further information is also available on the following website. http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/bhcv2/bhcarticles.nsf/pages/European_wasp

Red Hill Ward Forum

A number of other resident bodies in the Red Hill Ward have raised concerns about a range of issues including excessive rate increases, inappropriate development proposals and a lack of enforcement of restrictions on planning approvals. The SRA will contribute to this forum and will ensure that the interests of Somers Residents are preserved. Uppermost in our submissions will be the protection of the urban growth boundary and the green wedge protection of our coastal village.

Emergency services for 'The Promenade'

Residents who have had to use the '000' emergency number for Police, Fire or Ambulance services will be aware that operators will ask for your location to be defined by the nearest intersection of two streets or roads to be able to direct emergency service vehicles.

The Promenade in Somers has three non-contiguous sections. Two of these intersect with Parklands Avenue while the third intersects with Reserve Road.

While the Somers CFA has local knowledge of these access points, ambulance personnel could have real difficulty accessing a specific residence in The Promenade based upon the normal location questions asked by '000' operators.

To provide a measure of certainty for the residents of The Promenade about response times in a real threat to life or property the SRA has asked emergency services to review this exposure.

No Standing and Yellow Line Marking

Some residents seem to be unaware of parking restrictions that apply along our main bus route through the village and in particular along sections of Tasman Road and Parklands Avenue. In part this may be due to the removal of 'No Standing' signs by some residents and particularly by building contractors who are keen to ignore such restrictions for their own convenience.

The SRA has sought the co-operation of the MPSC to address this problem and we can advise that the following actions will be undertaken. The MPSC has agreed to a review of 'No Standing' signage to ensure that signs are erected at not less than 70M intervals. These signs may also be supported by **YELLOW LINE MARKING** similar to that on the store corner which has been very effective in improving safety near the store.

Residents should note this important initiative to avoid the possibility of a fine for inappropriate parking that has caused significant problems from time to time with the orderly passage of the bus service through the Village

Beach Erosion

Residents will have noted the significant loss of sand at the western end of Somers and also adjacent to the timber sea wall in front of Western Park Road. We have been advised that this erosion has been caused by very large swells that accompanied the storms around Easter this year. In recent months the sand appears to be returning and it does seem that this cycle of erosion and restoration has happened many times before.

In decades past residents have responded to these threats with a range of responses. However in today's environment these would be impossible as planning permission is required following a very extensive process of research, environmental impact reports and public consultation.

The SRA is concerned that should there be a repeat of the recent erosion some private property and public assets such as roads could very quickly be threatened.

This threat has been raised with our local State Member of Parliament and we are seeking discussions with DSE to identify protocols to manage any urgent response should it be required.

Visibility of House numbering in Somers

The clear numbering of properties is a legal requirement to enable emergency services to respond in a timely manner to '000' calls.

For your family's safety we would encourage you to comply with the following MPSC requirements for your street numbering.

The Number must be:

1. At least 90 mm in height
2. Located on the front boundary alignment
3. In a contrasting colour to its background
4. Located as near as practical to your driveway
5. Visible from both directions