



MORNINGTON Peninsula Shire councillors Anthony Marsh, the mayor Despi O'Connor and Antonella Celi were at Mornington Community and Information Centre when the chair of the centre's management committee, Alan Fleer, cut the ribbon with manager Stuart Davis-Meehan.
Picture: Yanni

Celebration for volunteers, building works

IT has been a while since those involved in the Mornington Community Information and Support Centre have been able to celebrate anything together face to face.

That all changed on Wednesday 19 May at a gathering at the centre in Main Street to celebrate National Volunteer Week, Australia's largest annual celebration of volunteers.

About 70 volunteers and the mayor Cr Despi

O'Connor were there for the ribbon cutting and to officially commission changes at the centre, including a shower for those experiencing homelessness, and contactless entry and exit doors.

Manager Stuart Davis-Meehan said the centre relied on the support of more than 100 volunteers who provided a range of support and information services to those experiencing personal and financial difficulties and tourists to the area.

"Our volunteers are all amazing people and we just couldn't provide the support we do without them," Mr Davis-Meehan said.

"In particular, [we] recognise the contribution of Merna Brydon, Margaret McArthur, Dale Lee and Helga Gross, all of whom have been volunteering at the centre for 30 years, and Margaret and Brian Goding, who have been honoured for their long-term support with life memberships."

Safe exit for women

THE federal government says it will provide immediate financial assistance to women who "make the brave decision to leave a violent relationship".

Flinders MP Greg Hunt said the money would support women on the Mornington Peninsula to leave difficult and violent relationships.

"The Escaping Violence Payment will provide vital financial support for women and children ... to escape family and domestic violence," Mr Hunt said. "[It] includes a cash payment of up to \$1500 and the remaining \$3500 in goods and services as well as wrap-around support from a community service provider to support these women in making this brave decision."

"Domestic violence can occur across all backgrounds and in all places and there is never any excuse, which is why providing vital financial support to help these women escape these relationships is so important."

The Peninsula Community Legal Centre said the new payment recognised the immediate need for emergency financial support for women and children fleeing family violence.

"However, based on PCLC's extensive experience through its family violence and family law practices, women who leave violent relationships need longer term financial support," community engagement officer Kirsten Young said.

"In particular, most women affected by family violence usually have related family law issues, such as how to get their share of the marital property pool which remains in the hands of their abusive partner, and [which] they are unable to access."

"Many are unable to afford the legal help required to go through the lengthy court processes required to access their property."

"While this announcement is a great first step, more federal funding is required for legal and other services aimed at securing women's access to property and other assets."

If you or someone you know is impacted by sexual assault, domestic or family violence, call 1800 737 732 or visit 1800RESPECT.org.au

Plan OK for sure, but not all happy

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THE long-awaited landscape strategy and concept plan for the Rye foreshore was approved last week, but not before being changed to make it more acceptable to councillors.

Deputy mayor Cr Sarah Race, whose Nepean Ward includes Rye, successfully added that a car park be retained west of the pier and that the rock wall be included in the promenade design to maintain the historical alliance with Napier Street, or its materials be used elsewhere in the redevelopment.

Also in her amendments were that all-abilities play equipment be included,

with a path connecting the Scout Hall car park and playground; the events and markets area receives three-phase power; that indigenous vegetation be planted, and that vegetation and boardwalks highlight the view line, and preserve the natural environment.

However, the plan did not prove popular with Cr Race's Nepean Ward colleague, Cr Susan Bissinger, who described adoption of the plan as signalling a "sad day".

"There will be nothing recognisable about Rye once this plan goes through," she said. "Rye will be like a poor cousin to the Gold Coast."

The adoption of the concept plan at Mornington Peninsula Shire's planning services committee Tuesday 18

May meeting means that detailed designs can begin.

Following adoption of the Rye Township Plan in 2017, the shire was given \$3.25 million from the state government the plan's first stage.

Its "key principles" outlined by project manager Elliott Reid and urban designer James Bryan are to preserve the natural environment and promote Rye as a "signature township for sustainability and eco-living"; improve connections for pedestrians and cyclists; improve the connection from the commercial precinct to the foreshore; and "create a revitalised public domain to establish a thriving destination across all seasons".

The two officers said these principles

are included in the Napier Street Plaza redevelopment, the foreshore promenade, changes to the foreshore camping area and the foreshore park.

They said the updated plan would "revitalise the foreshore and provide the most balanced approach" in response to feedback from the public.

"Once delivered, it is expected that the foreshore will provide a great place for all to use, year-round," they said.

Cr Race was "excited" to be moving that the foreshore plan be adopted, subject to her amendments.

"We are well on the way to seeing the Rye foreshore rejuvenated and revitalised," she said, adding that Rye was, in some ways, like a big country town. While other places have their

village green, or their botanic gardens, Rye has its foreshore."

"My amendments "are based on community feedback, petitions and conversations we have had with the community," she said.

Cr Bissinger said that "redevelopment was the last thing" on the minds of the many people she had spoken to.

"They wanted the [foreshore area] beautified and enhanced and tweaked and made functional and accessible for all. Now, with this degree of demolition and rebuilding, we will not recognise Rye again."

"People will say it is typical of council just bulldozing and concreting over everything."

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