

Media Release



Monday 21 June 2010

Bells Beach Wins Keep Australia Beautiful Victoria, Clean Beaches Awards

Surf Coast Mayor Cr Libby Coker has welcomed weekend announcements that the Council and the Bells Beach Advisory Committee had taken out the overall Keep Australia Beautiful Victoria 2010 Clean Beaches Award, as well as three separate clean beaches award categories.

"These awards recognise Council's concern for the Bells Beach Surfing Reserve," Cr Coker said.

"Bells Beach is an internationally recognised location and these awards serve to highlight the efforts going into managing this special place."

The Mayor said that, contrary to recent reported comments, draft management plans currently on public display were designed to ensure a sustainable future for the iconic surfing destination.

"The draft Bells Beach Coastal Management Plan is about finding ways to deal with the risks to the fragile environment of reserve and look after it into the future. It is about managing the increasing people pressure it faces.

"The fact that the Surf Coast has won the Environmental Innovation Award for the draft management plan recognises our careful and strategic approach to the long term management of the reserve.

"We have a responsibility to act. If we do not, Bells Beach Reserve will be further degraded. Issues include erosion, inadequate toilets, traffic flow, parking and pedestrian safety.

"We need to manage the tourist buses that visit the reserve and we need to continue to work with the organisers of the Rip Curl Pro surfing competition to lessen the impact of that event.

"The coastal plan proposes to nurture and enhance the reserve, rather than develop it. We are acting out of concern for the place. We want to retain it as an iconic surfing destination."

The Mayor encouraged interested people to comment on the draft plan, which contains recommendations including:

- Developing a licensing scheme to ensure the more-than 30 commercial operators that now use the Bells area contribute to the maintenance of the reserve and new facilities
- Providing upgraded infrastructure including a renewal of the stormwater systems, toilets at the Winkipop car park, new rubbish bins and landscaping that will preserve vegetation and views from current car parks
- Reconfiguring the Winkipop car park to provide more efficient use of space and provide better, safer access for pedestrians, while preserving views of the surf.

The plan will be on exhibition until Wednesday 30 June online at www.surfcoast.vic.gov.au/onexhibition.htm, at Council's Grossmans Road Customer Service Centre.

Submissions can be sent to info@surfcoast.vic.gov.au or to Bells Beach Surfing Reserve Coastal Management Plan c/o Surf Coast Shire, PO Box 350, Torquay, Vic, 3228.

.....
Not For Publication:

For further information contact Mayor, Cr Libby Coker 0427 337 558.

Jon Breedveld
Communications Co-ordinator
Surf Coast Shire
Ph. 5261 0639
Mob. 0417 311 441