

Don fighting for dunes

ERIN PEARSON

AN AFL footy star has joined the movement to protect sand dunes on the Bellarine Peninsula after a visit to the region.

Barwon Coast marketing and engagement manager Kate Wynn said help to share the 'Stay Off the Dunes' message came from defender Mark Baguley as Essendon Football Club visited Ocean Grove and Barwon Heads last week for a training camp.

"We are struggling to get the message out that huge amounts of damage is being done to fragile sand dunes," Ms Wynn said.

"The beach between high and low tide is resilient, but if the vegetation cover on sand dunes is damaged, strong winds may cause 'blowouts' or



Bomber Mark Baguley inspects sand dune damage.

gaps in the dune ridge.

"These can increase in size and the whole dune system can migrate inland.

"To avoid this, protecting

the vegetation on sand dunes is vital."

Baguley, a keen surfer, toured the damaged dunes with Ocean Grove Coastcare

and urged those using the area to stick to paths.

"I was disappointed to see that so many areas of the sand dunes along this great stretch

of Victorian coastline have been damaged by people walking, climbing up or playing on them," he said.

"The signs are clear — stay off them. It's common sense and not hard to do."

"If we all want to continue to enjoy these beaches and great surf breaks, and I certainly do, we need to simply walk down the access paths when we're coming for a surf or a beach walk."

Ocean Grove Coastcare president Frances McAloon said sandboarding and running on the dunes weakened plants anchoring the sand.

"Despite signs that ask everyone to stay off the dunes, many people still climb fences to walk through them to access the beach, run up them for exercise and let their kids play on them," she said.

Town to farewell man of people

JAIMEE WILKENS

BELOVED Queenscliff community figure John Monahan, who died on Sunday, is remembered by his friends and family as a kind gentleman always ready to put the needs of others in front of his own.

The 91-year-old grandfather will be laid to rest today, forever a part of the coastal home he never wanted to leave.

Son Greg Monahan said his father was someone who deeply loved his family, and the Queenscliff community.

"He was always wanting to help out in any way he could, always the sort of person who always wanted to support others in any way he could," he said.

"Everybody that has rung me so far has said that he was an absolute gentleman, never said a bad word about anybody, and that's how we'll remember him."

The Monahan family have been prominent members of the Queenscliff community for more than 50 years. The community sports centre utilised by the Queenscliff Cougars is named after John's father, John Andrew Monahan, who moved his family to Queenscliff when John was a boy. John Andrew was elected mayor of the Borough of Queenscliffe from 1950-1952, cementing a deep community connection between his family and the town.

Mr Monahan was a major sponsor of the Queenscliff Football Netball Club, long working hours keeping him from being as involved as his two younger brothers.

"My father loved this town, loved the people and never wanted to leave," Greg said.

The funeral for John Edward Monahan will be held today at Holy Trinity Church, Queenscliff, at 2pm.

Retreat proves a star among travellers

JAIMEE WILKENS

AN Indented Head bed and breakfast has received top honours in TripAdvisor's 2018 Traveller's Choice awards.

Starhaven Retreat is celebrating another successful year after being rated No.1 in Victoria in the bed and breakfast and inn category.

The ranking also pushes it to No.6 in Australia.

Co-Owner Robert Wilhelm said he was really proud Starhaven had received such a fantastic result.

"It's amazing, it really makes us proud that we've been working so hard and it's paying off," he said.

"Since we opened just over four years ago we have been overwhelmed by the positive feedback from our guests, and by the support from the Bellarine community."

The retreat was featured internationally on TV program *Grand Designs Australia* in 2010, something that Mr Wilhelm believes was a major drawcard for guests.

"Guests come to experience a *Grand Designs* home and ex-



HOUSE PROUD: Starhaven Retreat owners Robert Wilhelm, left, and Ian McDonald.

Picture: ALISON WYND

perience the Bellarine in a way that makes them feel right at home," he said.

TripAdvisor senior director

of communications Brooke Ferencsik said she hoped the list would inspire the community to plan their next trip.

"This year's Travellers' Choice awards for hotels recognise thousands of exceptional accommodations that

received the highest marks for overall experience."

For more information, go to www.starhaven.com.au

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