



Families and friends brought folding chairs and picnic rugs down to the foreshore to enjoy the night of entertainment which included free carnival rides, a visit from Santa, carols performances and fireworks.



Members of the amazing local Sisters and Misterys choir. Front Caroline Talbot, Sarah Taylor and Jenny Maroney. Back: Sue Brown, Judy Pitcher, Mary Taylor, Bev Watson, Jo Peacock and Jenny Franks.

# Christmas carols a triumph

Carols by the Bay made a triumphant return to the Cowes foreshore after Covid caused the cancellation of the popular community event for the past two years.

Initially scheduled for December 13, the event was moved to the following week due to adverse weather, and the decision proved to be a great one.

"It was such a good decision, as we were blessed with a perfect evening and night on the 20th," said Island Voice President Peter Paul.

The team from Island Voice took over the running of the event for the first time this year and produced a wonderful night of free entertainment for local families, with an estimated crowd of 4000 people.

"It was wonderful to see so many families out

and about on a perfect evening," Peter said.

"Island Voice sends a big thank you to the community who attended and then made many wonderful comments about the pre entertainment, the carols and the Bass Coast Council fireworks.

"What was even more fantastic, for us as organisers, was that the Foreshore was left beautifully neat and tidy. Thank you!

"All of the performers were amazing and Island Voice thanks them not only for all their preparation but also their willingness and ability to reschedule due to the weather.

"Our ever-reliable voluntary Emergency Services, the CFA and SES, attended and supported us. Thank you for all the work you do for our community."

In addition to the carols and fireworks (provided by Bass Coast Shire Council), Santa visited, there were free carnival rides, face-painters, a roving magician, an elf who read Christmas stories and food-vans.

Three of these vans were run by other community organisations and the profits made will go to fund their future community activities.

## Support

Peter said it was important that the event was free and open to the whole community, and this was only possible due to the support of sponsors.

"Without our sponsors, this free event could not have taken place," he said.

"We would like to thank our major sponsors the Bass Coast Shire, Phillip Island RSL, San

Remo, Cowes and Grantville District Community Bank (who all contributed funds and in-kind support), Bowens Hardware and Westernport Water.

"The Phillip Island and San Remo Advertiser helped us keep everyone informed about the event and Archisign created some brilliant artwork and brochures."

Even with this support, Island Voice undertook some major fundraising to keep the event and activities free for everyone to enjoy.

The following helped with fundraising: A Maze'N Things, Bluegum Garden Supplies, Christine Caldwell, Clip'n Climb, Coles Supermarket, H-Bombs Barbers, Heard of Cowes, Klepner's Jewellers, Mitre10, North Pier Hotel, Offshore Design, Panny's Amazing World of Chocolate, Phillip Island Go Karts, Phillip Island Nature Parks, Phillip Island Ten Pin Bowling and Entertainment Centre, Priceline Pharmacy, Terry Whites Pharmacy, The Davis and Trubridge families, Wildlife Cruises and Zenu Software.

Peter said it was the generous support of local business that made the night possible.

"We are very grateful for all of this support and we look forward to working with you all next year.

"To those who attended the carols, if you can, please thank these businesses with your support, in return. Let's do it again in December 2023!

"Island Voice wishes everyone much happiness for the New Year."



An estimated crowd of over 4000 people gathered to enjoy the entertainment, carols and fireworks at Carols by the Bay on December 20. Photo: Katrina Lawrence.



The free rides kept the children entertained from 5.20pm, before the arrival of Santa, then the carols performances and the fireworks.