

## Portarlington Community Email Tree

### How it began

The beginning was with the [Portarlington Community Building Initiative](#).

In 2009, the community building initiative organised a Portarlington [Community Expo](#) so all community groups could come together to showcase what they do.

The Expo was an amazing success. All groups were invited to an afternoon tea to offer 'where to from here' suggestions.

The message was loud and clear: the most pressing need was effective sharing of information about group activities and events without adding extra work to volunteers.



*emailus robusta* ©

New tree species locally grown and thriving

Unique to Portarlington

Identifiable by its numerous email boxes

And so the seed for the Email Tree was sown.

When the Portarlington Community Building Initiative finished in February 2011, members of the Portarlington Community Association agreed the association would sponsor for the Email Tree. From August 2018, the Tree is strong enough to stand on its own and has its own [website](#)

### What's changed

1. In the beginning, the Email Tree was only sent to representatives of community groups. This wasn't broad enough because only people who were already a member of a community group would know what's happening  
Now the Email Tree is sent to anyone who wants to stay in touch with Portarlington.  
The Email Tree now goes
  - Overseas
  - Interstate
  - Across Victoria
2. The Email Tree now covers information about Indented Head community activities as the town is small and closely associated with Portarlington.

### What constitutes a community group

In the beginning it was

- A home-grown Portarlington community group.
- A Portarlington branch of an international, national, state or regional organisation.  
Examples: international (Lions, Anglican Church), national (CWA), regional (Bellarine Bayside, Bellarine Community Health).

### What's changed

The Email Tree now includes information from other sources because it may interest or impact on residents. Examples: Mitchelton Bay Bike Classic that requires local road closures, Red Cross when they have low cost preparation of Wills in another town, Vic Roads for meetings about the Drysdale Ring Road that are held in Drysdale.

## Portarlington Community Building Initiative

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Community building initiatives aim to support residents identify and work on local community priorities, strengthen local networks, enhance skills, knowledge and resources. The Portarlington Community Building Initiative, funded by the Department of Planning and Community Development via the City of Greater Geelong, employs a facilitator (0.6 FTE), supported by a local steering committee, to bring about a sense of cohesiveness, commonality of effort and a shared vision for Portarlington. The project commenced in February 2007 and will cease in February 2011.

## Portarlington Community Expo

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The steering committee recognised that with over 60 community groups in Portarlington, there was potential to harness the collective contribution that volunteers make to the town and strengthen the ties between these groups<sup>1</sup>.

A community expo was considered an ideal way for groups to come together, showcase their activities and provide a fun environment for residents who may not be engaged in community activities, to see what is on offer.

The outcomes that the CBI steering committee aimed to achieve were community strengthening, group pride, sense of belonging and ongoing group interaction, cohesion and collaboration.

The criterion set by the steering committee for a community expo was:

- be vibrant and interactive with community;
- be inclusive of all community groups, and
- be cost-neutral for community groups.



<sup>1</sup> By the time the expo was held, over 80 groups were identified.