



The Penguin

Newsletter of Phillip Island Conservation Society Fourth Quarter, December 2011



Newsletter

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Dates for Your Diary 2012

Sat Jan 7: PICS & Barb Martin Bush Bank street stall, outside Baker's Delight 10-12. Drop by and say hello.

Sat Jan 7: Animals of Oz: reptiles, frogs, possum, etc. Heritage Centre meeting room 10-12. Funded by Bass Coast Shire Environment Dept. Organised by PICS. Bring along any youngsters you have staying with you! Free!

Sat Jan 14 2012 – **PICS AGM.** Bring and share meal 6.30 p.m., speaker: Greg Hunt (Not the member for Flinders) Executive Officer at South East Councils *Climate Change* Alliance which includes Bass Coast, will speak on “Climate change impacts and adaptations, with particular reference to Western Port”. GM & AGM to follow. Parish Hall, Cowes.

Sun Jan 15: Red Rocks Coast Action. Rubbish removal and tidy up. Meet at car park 10 a.m. Refreshments.

Sat 14 April: General Meeting. Heritage Centre Meeting Room, 7.30 p.m. Speaker TBA.

Sun 15 April: Red Rocks Coast Action. Meet at car park 10 a.m.
Sat 7 July: General Meeting. Heritage Centre Meeting Room.
7.30 p.m. Speaker TBA.

Sun 8 July: Red Rocks Coast Action. Planting morning. Meet
at car park 10 a.m.

Sun 30 Sep: Red Rocks Coast Action. Weed control. Meet at
car park 10 a.m.

Fri 5 Oct: "Meet the Candidates" forum Council Elections.
Heritage Centre meeting room; 7.30 p.m.

Sat 6 Oct: General Meeting. Heritage Centre Meeting Room.
7.30 p.m. Speaker TBA.

Sun 7 Oct: Red Rocks Coast Action. Planting morning. Meet at
car park 10 a.m.

Sat 12th Jan 2013: AGM.

Enquiries for all events: Christine Grayden, ph 5956 8501
m 0400 900 612 e: cgrayden@waterfront.net.au

Barb Martin Bush Bank: Sales and volunteers - every
Wednesday plus 1st Saturday of each month 10 - 1. Phone
Anne Davie 5956 8216.

Friends of Koalas (FOK) Habitat Days: First Saturday of
every month at 10 a.m. Contact Patsy Hunt ph 5952 2407

Koala Count at the Koala Conservation Centre, second
Tuesday of every month at 10am. Contact Patsy Hunt ph 5952
2407

Biosphere - Bass Coast Round Table meets at San Remo
on the third Friday of every month at 8 p.m. Contact Jane
Jobe, convenor, ph 0409 530 898.

Friends of Churchill Island (FOCIS): email:
focis2009@hotmail.com.

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ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING: SAT JAN 14, 2012

PARISH HALL COWES

Speaker: Greg Hunt, CEO, South East Councils Climate
Change Alliance

“Climate change impacts and adaptations, with particular
reference to Western Port”

Bring and share meal 6.30 p.m. Speaker 7.15 p.m. Meeting 8
p.m.

All are welcome!

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Members,

So, here we are at the end of another busy year – and what a year! The Summerlands ‘Buy Back’ completed, and the new Wildlife Rehabilitation Centre opened. So, two items which have been on the PICS Agenda for forty years can now be ticked off!

I hope that you are planning to be at the Annual Meeting on the second Saturday in January. I hope, too, that you are considering standing as either an Office Bearer or Committee Member. As you will see, from the 2012 Calendar of Events, some dates already are firmly set, but the Committee Meeting dates will be settled after the Committee is elected. When, where and how often the Committee meets is up to its members to decide.

Local government elections throughout Victoria will be held in October 2012. Our “Meet the Candidates” Forum will be held on **FRIDAY, OCTOBER 5**. As well as considering standing for the PICS committee, should YOU be considering nominating for Local Government? Every municipality needs councillors who will speak for the environment!

With best wishes for a peaceful and happy Christmas and for lots of enthusiasm and energy for 2012.

Margaret Hancock, President.

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PICS SPRING SEASONAL WALK:
Across the Phillip Island Bridge, along Cleeland Bight and
return

It looked like rain. As the four of us stood in the playground in San Remo, we contemplated the dark sky and the stiff southwesterly breeze. We were aiming for Cleeland Bight, and crossing the bridge, a pleasantly exhilarating experience on a good day, may not be so comfortable today. Being hardy souls, we voted to continue.

San Remo has a long and interesting history. Originally it was known as “Griffiths Point” after a seafarer based here early in the 19th century. He traded with sealers and whalers in the area. Coal mining at Kilcunda 1870-88 resulted in the development of the port at Griffiths Point, as coal brought in by bullock teams, later tramways, was shipped out. Locals voted to change the town’s name to “San Remo”, after an Italian town, in 1888 – probably to attract holiday-makers. The fishing industry developed in the 20th century, and the growing importance of Phillip Island as a destination and subsequent construction of the bridges, guaranteed San Remo’s growth to the present day.

We crossed the bridge in light drizzle. The tide was heading into the Bay via the Eastern Passage, discovered by George Bass (1798), and we noted the rush of water beneath us. It can reach four metres per second (9knots) in speed and the tide range is more than 3 metres. The channel, which is closer to the San Remo side, is 7-8 metres deep at low water, but deepens to 18 metres as it narrows to the area beneath the power lines. A diver friend told me there are masses of bottles on the sea floor down there, but it is mostly bare of marine life, with just a few sponges. Recently the dreaded Northern Pacific Sea Star has been discovered nearby, and attempts made to eradicate it. Known as the “new bridge”, this concrete and steel structure was built in 1969, at a cost then of \$3.25 million, and is 650 metres long.

We stepped onto Phillip Island and the rain greeted us in earnest, driven on by the wind. We sought shelter of sorts in coastal tea tree at the landing point of the first Phillip Island bridge, a narrow remnant of the roadway now bearing a plaque commemorating the bridge’s construction in 1940, for a cost of 50,000 pounds. Despite the obvious benefits, Phillip Islanders had been reluctant initially to support the bridge project, perhaps foreseeing how it would change their lives, and the condition of the Island, for ever. It was left to Richard Grayden and Rupert Harris to lobby their fellow residents and the State government, and to finally win support. The bridge was 540 m long and 5.5 m wide.

Several of us had childhood memories of this beautiful old suspension bridge, the clickety-clack and sense of movement as you crossed, the sense of childhood excitement on arrival, the sense of sadness on departing. Modern times caught up with that old icon of island holidays. Tourist buses had to unload passenger to cross, waiting then for their cargo to walk over.

We faced the rain and headed south along the curve of the beach of Cleeland Bight, Cape Woolamai's dark outline blurred by showers. Many thousands of years ago, this bay extended inland almost up to where the Information Centre stands today. A barrier of sand then developed to seaward, imprisoning what is now Newhaven Swamp, a fresh-water lagoon. The area is a geomorphological site of state significance and has been prograding rapidly in recent years.

Disturbance to the Cape Woolamai dune system accompanying European settlement supplied large amounts of mobile sand, which arrived via longshore drift to build up the dunes behind the beach. Between 1941 and 2000, dunes have extended more than 100 metres seaward as a result. However, the low sand cliffs at the back of the beach today signify a recent erosion phase as the stabilised Cape Woolamai dunes no longer supply sufficient sand.

Our walk took us as far as a point where the Newhaven Swamp is closest to the beach, behind 50 m of dunes. An outlet was dug in 1954 through the dunes by George Johns, who owned and operated a market garden between the main road and the Caravan Park. In wet years, his property would be partly flooded as levels rose in the Swamp, and by digging a channel through the dunes, he aimed to lower the water level to reduce this flooding. It took two weeks with a horse pulling a four foot scoop (What, no permit?!) Mr Johns kept the outlet open into the 60s when the market garden was taken over to create the Phillip Island entry to the new bridge. During the 1970s and 80s the Phillip Island Shire Council periodically maintained the gap in the dunes citing mosquito control around Newhaven and protection of the caravan park as reasons. Today the dunes are back in place, but will encroaching beach erosion provide a natural outlet in years to come?

With a certain sense of urgency we retraced our steps back to and over the bridge. When we arrived back in San Remo after our one and a half hour exploration, you guessed it, it was still raining!

John Eddy.

Red rocks coast action

We have recently applied for a Communities for Nature grant of \$13,000 to provide a proper access track from the Appley Ave walkway to the beach, with steps at the beach end, fencing and revegetation. It's good that the money is being made available, but the application form was a doozy, taking Christine three full days and about 10 phone calls to complete.

Thanks to Denis Cox and Derek Hibbert for their help. Red Rocks Coast Action operates under the auspices of PICS and in conjunction with the Bass Coast Shire Council and Department of Sustainability and Environment. RSVP: John Eddy, Red Rocks Coast Action Co-ordinator, ph 5956 8501

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BASS COAST SHIRE ENVIRONMENT GROUPS GET TOGETHER

SAT OCT 8 2011

Despite only 20 participants, it proved to be a very worthwhile and enjoyable afternoon. Thanks to Wonthaggi Urban Landcare for hosting us and organising such a good event. The venue, the meeting room at Wonthaggi Town Hall, proved most suitable. BCSC supplied the venue and the catering.

WALKS:

The event began with a choice of two walks, one through the Wonthaggi Wetlands and the other at Tank Hill reserve.

(i) Wonthaggi Wetlands:

We entered the reserve at the western end of Korumburra Rd (behind Woolworths) This 35 hectares in the centre of Wonthaggi is the site previously occupied by the Station Area Coal Mine, and is unsafe for any buildings because of the extensive tunnels that lie underneath it, leading to sink holes. Work to conserve and revegetate the area began in the 1980s, and today Wonthaggi Urban Landcare Group takes a leading role in management.

A network of walking/cycling tracks took our group through remnant woodland growing on an ancient dune system, with Narrow-leaved Peppermint the dominant tree, and Coast Wattle, Prickly teatree, Bracken and Lomandra as the understorey. Wet hollows carry Swamp paperbark and Sword Sedge. Perfect habitat for a range of wildlife including many bird species, kangaroos, wombats and echidnas.

To the west, our walk took us into more open country, including the lakes, island and bird hides of the wetlands section. Plans were developed in 1991 for this area and construction work, planting and rubbish removal has proceeded in stages since then. Wonthaggi is very fortunate to have such a valuable natural asset situated so centrally in the town.

(ii) Tank Hill:

Frank Coldabella gave us an introductory talk. This area in Reed Crescent, was originally a tribal meeting place for the Bunurong people. Anderson's Inlet could be seen from the top of the hill. Surveyors of Wonthaggi camped here for the permanent water. Later a windmill was placed on the top of the hill and a tank, the water being reticulated down to the town below. The area has always been public land, but in 1965 it was cleared for grazing and in the 1970s was used for sand mining the white sand, including into middens. However, in 1973 the then Borough Engineer, Russell Wilson, had the first strip of vegetation planted out. Things tend to happen in an ad hoc manner. Swamp gum, Manna gum, Peppermint, Prickly Moses, Casuarinas and Banksias have been planted at various times.

Wonthaggi Urban Landcare has planted 1,000 trees there and also eradicated a lot of Pittosporum. Now Broom is a problem. Parks Victoria has cleared a large area of blackberries. There are now very many other invasive species evident in the reserve including blue periwinkle, mirror bush, fruit trees, asparagus fern, cleavers, Watsonia, arum lilly, thistles, docks, blackberries, onion weed, etc, so the various agencies involved still have a lot of work to do in this interesting reserve. Many birds were heard calling.

SPEAKERS:

1. Lisa Wangman - Phillip Island Urban Landcare, Main Speaker:

Lisa gave an overview of Landcare activities in the area in recent times. She has just completed a three year project, "Sustaining Coastal Communities", which involved 60 homes and 20 businesses in trying to reduce their impact on the environment. The targets were:

- 15% saving in energy
- 30% saving in mains water
- 50% reduction in waste

The program involved:

4 seminars/tours a year

Sustainable Living Festivals

Production of a generic kit (CD form) for use in other areas

Production of a brochure

Environment Detective Program for primary students (using

Wonthaggi Wetlands)

Native vegetation exchange – participation in this Victorian Govt program

Phillip Island Landcare was the third such group in Victoria, starting in 1987. Now has government and corporate sponsorship. 130 landholders have been trained. Programs include Solutions at the Source – part of Land Stewardship program – which has seen increased productivity on farms with a lot of farmers thinking long term and winning awards.

2. Elizabeth Shaw - Western Port Bird Observation and Conservation (WESBOC)

This is the oldest branch within the Bird Observation and Conservation network (BOCCA), having been going for 27 years. Recently BOCCA voted to amalgamate with Birds Australia. WESBOC now thinking of a name change to include their real area in Bass Coast Shire. Elizabeth is the publicity officer. WESBOC meets for bird walks on the 2nd Saturday of most months. Last Friday afternoon of most months they have a smaller walk. The walks are being advertised this summer in the Sun, Surf and Sand book.

3. Simone Jamieson – Wonthaggi Community Garden

Located in area with Bass Coast community learning and Chisholm TAFE. She is employed on a 12 month contract from a grant. Her role is to build up the garden membership, run education programs and produce a newsletter once a month. They collaborate with Mitchell House garden. They meet Thursday 10 – 12. Started in 2008. Now have 15 plots, individual plot holders and community plots. Plots are 1 x 1/2 sleeper length. Excess produce goes to produce swap at the Harvest Centre Mitchell House. Hard to get labour into the garden. Groups involved include Moonyah, Garnham House, ESL students, VCAL, year 9. Looking to get Family Day Care involved with a children's garden. \$15 per year membership and \$15 per plot per year.

4. Richard Cantwell – Example of a sustainable house

Has built in the back yard of the pub at South Dudley. Basically like a machinery shed, faces north, pergola out front, double glazing, 20,000 litre tank under car port + 6,000 litre tank. No town water. 2.1 kw on roof on adjustable frame. Evacuated tube hws. Second hand flooring from school in Hamilton. Hardwood windows from plantation grown Victorian Ash. Cost \$200,000. 7 x 20 m, 140 sq m. Next time would use all recycled materials. Garden has food-bearing plants on every spare bit of land, including nature strip. Has a shared garden.

5. John Wright – Ventnor Coast Care

Work under BCSC and DSE. Paperwork is high – 5 forms

every time we meet! Working with other agencies on getting rid of kikuyu and couch grass and rabbits. Planted 1,000 plants in three different sites this year. West Ventnor Group takes over from Grossard Point south and Red Rocks group takes over from Saltwater Creek. Have about 12 members. Council puts in applications for grants and provides plants and tools for working bees.

6. Bernie McComb – Groundswell Bass Coast

Climate change group. Meet fortnightly at Mitchell House or Cowes. Ocean Acidification forum. Campaigning to stop Hazelwood new coal fired power station. After zero carbon for Australia by 2020 through use of solar, thermal and wind. Planning to have the earth globe come to Bass Coast as part of the Victoria wide campaign leading up to the Senate vote on pollution tax.

7. Ian Turnbull – Anderson Inlet Landcare Group

Planted 2,000 trees. Planting local streams and wildlife corridors. There is one bit of public land at Pound Creek of 3/4 acre which they would like to replant. However it is in 3 titles and difficult to get all agencies co-operating. Same problem WULC has with Tank Hill.

8. Dave Sutton – South Gippsland Conservation Society

Established 37 years ago. Active members at Yarram, La Trobe Valley, Coronet Bay, Inverloch. Four branches. Wonthaggi currently dormant. Auspicing Sustainability group and Groundswell. Has broad education program, 1500 kids last year.

Dave gave a Power Point presentation to emphasise the major environmental issues we face. On a global scale we are using 140% of our natural capital. Issues: climate change, ocean acidification, mantra of growth, decreased biodiversity, cutbacks by government, no meaningful debate on climate change or biodiversity or growth.

In this region issues include: increased urbanisation, increased growth, the ‘saltwater pump’ (desalination plant), poor quality councils, potential coal seam gas extraction. Our coastline is spectacular and should be preserved from urban growth.

9. Dave Sutton – Energy Innovation Co-op

Funding for 500 kw panels over 18 months up to 540 kw, mainly in BCS. Grid connect system on roofs. South Gippsland Shire has committed to 60 kw.

10. John Eddy - Red Rocks Coast Action

Auspiced by Phillip Island Conservation Society Inc, works with BCS and DSE. Revegetation, weed control. Grant money from “Come for a Walk” book of \$2,000 used for information

signage at bar b cue shelter. In by Christmas. \$1000 from Public Fund (tax deductible donations) used to have PICS member and botanist Alison Oates do a Red Rocks Botanical Survey. She found 90 indigenous species and 90 species of weeds. Highly significant moonah and Banksia woodland with many old individuals.

John has also been trialing growing Coastal Beard Heath from seed. After planting, nothing appeared for 13 weeks. Results so far: acid treatment 20% germination; sunlight exposure 14% germination. Now has over 100 plants.

11. Australian Plant Society advertised their Native Flower Show to be held at Leongatha 15-16 October.

12. Mike Cleeland – Bunurong Coast Education

Mike has recently been appointed as part time Education Officer. He is extremely busy. Mike had to leave early due to a performance in the evening, but left a form for potential volunteer assistants who would like to help out when he has large numbers of students to deal with.

13. Gabrielle Mahony – Rhyll Coast Action

Have 3-5 working bees per year under the direction of BCSC environment officers. Mainly involved in planting and woody weed control.

14. Christine Grayden – Phillip Island Conservation Society

We seem to be spending a lot of our time still at VCAT fighting for correct drainage to protect waterways and the bays, connectivity of walking/bike paths within and between estates to get people out of their cars and more public open space where large trees can be planted. We are often on the same side as BCSC these days which is heartening. Five of our members appeared before Planning Panels Victoria for the hearing of the Silverleaves, Cowes, Ventnor Structure Plan and gave strong presentations against further development near the Rhyll Inlet based on birds, vegetation, landscape, urban issues and acid sulphate soils. PPV agreed with most of what we said and have stopped all but one development at the head of the Inlet. PICS was also active in having the minister reverse his decision to rezone farm land to urban development on the fringe of Ventnor. So sometimes we have wins!

14. Caroline Charles – Wonthaggi Urban Landcare

Caroline initiated a discussion about the get together forums and whether they should be continued given the small numbers attending this year compared with other years. However, all participants present felt that the face-to-face interaction and reports of good work being done by various organisations was worth it. No group has volunteered to organise next year's get together. If anyone is interested they

can contact Christine Grayden from PICS who has the email list of envt groups in BCSC and can assist with organisation.

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HELP WANTED!

We have got seriously behind with our valuable scrap books of PI environment issues cuttings. If anyone has the time to paste in articles already cut out &/or cut out & paste others from the last 6 months of saved Advertisers, please call Christine.

Scrap books & glue sticks provided. Even a few hours will make a difference!

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Phillip Island Conservation Society Inc.

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF
THE PHILLIP ISLAND CONSERVATION SOCIETY
HELD AT THE PARISH HALL. 15.1.11**

The AGM followed the General Meeting
President Margaret Hancock OPENED the meeting
ATTENDANCE AND APOLOGIES : as per General Meeting
MINUTES OF THE AGM OF 9.1.10 Motion : That the
Minutes be accepted Moved : T Nott Seconded C
Fensham Carried
PRESIDENT'S REPORT Motion : That it be accepted.
Moved P Manning Seconded J Eddy Carried
TREASURER'S REPORT Motion : That the Treasurer's
Report be accepted. Moved C Grayden Seconded T Nott
Carried
Cr Wright was invited to chair the Election of Office Bearers
and Committee for the next 12 months.
M Hancock was nominated as President by P Manning
Seconded J Eddy. Carried.
Minute Secretary, Gaye Cleland has agreed to continue
, following her return from overseas
Motion : That the nominated committee members be elected

: P Taylor, P Manning J Jansson, T Nott, A Davie Moved : P Fensham Seconded P Hunt Carried

C Grayden agreed to continue as Treasurer at this stage.

PUBLIC OFFICER : Motion : That Margaret Hancock continue as the Public Officer Moved : P Manning Seconded J Eddy Carried

Meeting closed at 10.25 pm

NEXT AGM 14.1.12

RE: 2012 - Please Note: Margaret will be retiring as President at the Annual General Meeting. Also, legislation soon to come in requires that our Public Officer is our Secretary. We therefore need a President, Vice President and Secretary or Treasurer (current Treasurer is prepared to be Secretary if another Treasurer can be found) in order to keep functioning. **Please consider standing for one of the positions. Or perhaps you know of someone who would be interested?** Nomination forms have gone out to everyone with this newsletter.

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Phillip Island Conservation Society Inc.

Minutes of General Meeting held October 1, 2011 at 7.30 pm. Heritage Centre, Cowes

1. President M. Hancock opened the meeting at 7.45 pm and welcomed attendees.
2. **PRESENT** as per attendance book.
3. **APOLOGIES** as per attendance book.
4. **GUEST SPEAKER.** M. Hancock welcomed Benita Russell from Westernport Water.
5. **VOTE OF THANKS** was passed by acclamation.
6. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS GENERAL MEETING** of 9.7.11 as circulated.

MOTION: That the Minutes be accepted.

MOVED: J. Eddy. *SECONDED:* A. Davie. *CARRIED.*

7. BUSINESS ARISING

\$1,000 donation to the PINP Rehabilitation Centre. M. Hancock has spoken to CEO Matt Jackson and is awaiting decision on purchase.

8. CORRESPONDENCE as tabled :

In: Various planning matters.

Out: Various planning matters.

To the Planning Minister with thanks for reconsidering his decision regarding the Cadogan development proposal.

MOTION: that the correspondence be received.

MOVED: P. Manning. *SECONDED:* P. Hunt. *CARRIED.*

9. TREASURER'S REPORT: tabled.

MOTION: that the Treasurer's Report be accepted.

MOVED: J. Eddy. *SECONDED:* A. Davie. *CARRIED.*

10. PLANNING ISSUES

BOYS' HOME – to VCAT for mediation on Monday 3rd October.

WHYTESANDS – M. Hancock has the plans.

WOLLOMAI HOUSE – Concerns remain regarding proximity to the Newhaven swamp with its mosquito population and means of control.

11. GENERAL BUSINESS.

PINP STRATEGIC PLAN. Following both afternoon and evening presentations, comments have been extended to 11th October. It is proving difficult to visualize the footprint involved with the proposal to relocate the Visitor Centre.

GREAT SOUTH COAST TRAIL. The Society has concerns.

'CHINAMANS' ESTATE. Landcare and the BCSC are reportedly active in working towards a resolution of this problem.

MOTION: That PICS continue to pressure the BCSC and DSE.

MOVED: M. Cleeland. *SECONDED:* J. Jansson. *CARRIED.*

WILDLIFE FENCES. PICS would urge the BCSC and PINP to consider the high netting fences that have been erected in northern NSW and Queensland. There were reportedly 248 wallabies on the Island at the most recent census.

PARKLANDS RETIREMENT VILLAGE. Proposal for the corner of Settlement Rd and McKenzie St Cowes has been bought back by David Jobe with the BCSC insisting on high-density development.

BLUEGUM RESERVE. Several trees have been removed.

MOTION: that replanting take place.

MOVED: P. Manning. *SECONDED:* M. Cleeland. *CARRIED.*

MARINE SAFETY REGULATIONS. M. Schinkel will prepare a

draft submission for M. Hancock's approval.

BEVERLEY RD NEWHAVEN. An information session is to be held on Wednesday 5th October at the Newhaven Information Centre regarding the proposed rezoning amendment.

EPA & NOISE LEVELS AT THE RACETRACK. It was suggested that due to perceived increased noise levels and fewer noise-free weekends, that after the Grand Prix has taken place, PICS pursue with the EPA the issue of 'testing' and 'hot laps' as permitted uses.

ENVIRONMENT GROUPS GET-TOGETHER. Wonthaggi Town Hall Saturday 8th October. The importance of setting dates well ahead was stressed to avoid clashes with other groups.

CLIMATE CHANGE. Time to revisit the issue with Ella Boyen.

A. Davie to follow up the connection with Barry Brooks.

KOALAS. REPORT TO THE SENATE INQUIRY. The importance of ongoing monitoring in the prevention of the species becoming further endangered.

NEXT GENERAL MEETING AND AGM 14th January 2012.

MEETING CLOSED at 10.15 pm.

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MEMBERSHIP AND PUBLIC FUND FORMS

Download the [**Membership Renewal Form**](#) and send it in today if you have not renewed your subscription, or if you want to become a new member.

The [**Public Fund**](#) donation form can be downloaded for your contribution to this fund. Feel free to share these with a friend or neighbour.

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PICS CONTACTS

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