



# The Penguin

Newsletter of Phillip Island Conservation Society - Second Quarter, June 2004

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Newsletter

## Dates for your Diary

**Friday 2nd July:** 7-10 pm, Western Port Marine Parks, Newhaven Yacht Club. Further info contact Anwyn Martin, ph: 5678 0306

**Saturday 3rd July: General Meeting,** 8 pm, Meeting Room, Heritage Centre, Thompson Ave, Cowes. Topic - Research Trip to the Antarctic.

**Sunday 4th July: Working Bee,** Fiveways - bring tools for weeding, and lunch. 10 a.m. start.

**Saturday 24th July: Children's Environment Morning,** Koalas (see below)

**Friday 6<sup>th</sup> August: Committee Meeting,** 8.00 pm, Cultural Centre, Cowes

**Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> August: Seasonal Walk,** Guided Historical tour of Swan Lake. 2pm at the car park. Leader: Christine Grayden

**Saturday 24th August: Children's Environment Morning:** Recycling & Reusing

**Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> September: Landcare Dinner**

**Friday 10<sup>th</sup> September: Committee Meeting,** 8.00 pm, Cultural Centre, Cowes

**Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> September:** Children's Environment Morning: Spring Flowers

**Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> September:** General Meeting

**Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> September:** Working Bee

**Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> October:** Children's Environment Morning: Dinosaurs

**Friday 5<sup>th</sup> November:** Committee Meeting, 8.00 pm, Cultural Centre, Cowes

**Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> November:** Children's Environment Morning: Microscope Day

**Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> November:** Seasonal Walk

**Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> December:** Committee Meeting, 8.00 pm, Cultural Centre, Cowes

**Friday 4<sup>th</sup> December:** Children's Environment Morning: Litter

**Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> January:** Children's Environment Morning: The Sea

**Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> January:** PICS AGM

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## CHILDREN'S ENVIRONMENT MORNINGS

Christine Grayden and Gillian Armstrong have initiated a trial program of Children's Environment Mornings. These will run usually on the second Saturday of the month at the Meeting Room in the Heritage Centre from 11 am - 12 noon, commencing on July 24th. The idea is for the children (age kinder to 8 yrs) to have fun, learn something about the environment, and enjoy some different art/craft activities related to the topic each month.

The dates and topics for 2004 are:

**Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> July:** Koalas

**Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> August:** Recycling & Reusing

**Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> September:** Spring Flowers

**Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> October:** Dinosaurs

**Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> November:** Microscope Day

**Saturday 4th December: Litter**

**Saturday 8th January 2005: The Sea**

The full program, detailing all the activities for each session, is available from Christine (Ph: 5956 8501, or email:

[cgrayden@waterfront.net.au](mailto:cgrayden@waterfront.net.au) ) Please contact Christine if you can help with any of the sessions or if you would like to become a sponsor to help fund this exciting program.

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## **FROM THE PRESIDENT**

**Dear Members,**

If you were one of the lucky people who attended our Planning/Discussion Day at Rhyll you will know what a great time we had! Good company, lively discussion, some good outcomes, and, as promised a "Scrumptious Lunch"! (Thank you, Penny and friends). A positive outcome will be the "Children's Environment Mornings" -💎 thank you Christine Grayden and Gillian Armstrong for the initiative. Please contact Christine ph 5956 8501 if you are able to help. (See later article) At its June meeting the Committee approved the spending of money for the room hire and needed materials, but donations are always welcome!

As you will see elsewhere, the Design Framework Implementation Committee has been appointed, and the first meeting has been held. Now that the Committee is UP there is a desperate need for it to be RUNNING! There are so many Amendments needed to get the Planning Scheme into good shape - and until that is done the seemingly endless visits to VCAT will continue. Amendments, of course, take time: a minimum of six months, but probably longer. Meanwhile the Planning Applications keep rolling in.

There is ABSOLUTELY NO NEWS about the future of the Seal Rocks Victoria Australia building at Point Grant. There is ABSOLUTELY NO NEWS of the future membership of the Phillip Island Nature Park Board. The current Board's term finishes on August 4th according to media release from the Minister for Environment and Minister for Planning issued on 21st July 2003.

The GOOD NEWS is that our Island looks marvellous! Lots and lots of rain, lots and lots of wind, and magnificent sunsets.

I hope that you will be able to come to our General Meeting on Saturday July 3rd and a Working Bee (weeds and rubbish) at

Fiveways on the following day.

With best wishes,

**Margaret Hancock, President.**

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## **BARB MARTIN BUSHBANK**

With the rain and sunshine the plants at the Bushbank are looking magnificent. Orders are now being dispatched and conditions for planting are excellent. Some people may wait to do their plantings in autumn but for those with areas that become wet after winter, now is a good time to get plants in the ground. A reminder that the Bushbank is open for sales on Wednesday morning and on the first Saturday morning of the month. Prices are competitive and the bonus for your little or big plot is that all the plants are native to the Island and raised in local conditions. By purchasing from the Bushbank you will support the dream to return the Island to a greener landscape.

It is nearly 12 months since our co-ordinator, Bec Jack was appointed and the committee congratulates her on her remarkable achievements in such a short time. The volunteer hours spent with her are so productive and she teaches us all so much. Happy planting everyone.

Anne Davie

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## **PICS PUBLIC FUND**

The following motion was passed at our Special Meeting after the Planning Forum:

Section 37.3(h)

In case of the winding-up of the Fund, any surplus assets of the Fund are to be transferred to another Fund with similar objectives that is on the Register of Environmental Organisations.

This enables us to send the necessary completed paperwork to the Minister to allow our Public Fund to be established. Hopefully, tax deductibility for donations is not far away!

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## **PICS PLANNING WORKSHOP**

## APRIL 17th 2004 — RHYLL MECHANICS HALL

The workshop was quite well attended and covered a lot of ground. Margaret Hancock began by reminding us of the public land now reserved for environmental purposes, made possible by the far-sightedness of community and PICS members. Margaret Johnson spoke of the need for a review of where PICS is headed. I gave a sketch history of planning pertaining directly to Phillip Island, and Greg Johnson took us through the early sections of the Bass Coast Planning Scheme. In between there was lively discussion on several topical issues. The forum concluded with an open session where comments were written on butcher's paper on the theme: What do you want to see PICS doing NOW? that saw lots of ideas flying around Rhyll Hall! In (very) brief, the comments were:

- ◆ Need to market ourselves
- ◆ Should be greater respect for PICS, given that our membership is a great repository for information and ideas on the Phillip Island environment
- ◆ There are urgent current issues which PICS must tackle - often no one else will.
- ◆ The community needs a proper environment centre in Cowes, for us, FOK, Landcare, etc.
- ◆ PICS needs MORE MEMBERS
- ◆ We need to continue to work/work better in partnership with other environment groups, such as Wesboc and Landcare
- ◆ Direction? PICS could act as co-ordinator for other community environment groups; Community education needed
- ◆ Bass Coast Shire councillors need to be invited to attend meetings, contribute to newsletter
- ◆ ◆Saturday morning club◆ for children (\*\*see article this edition)
- ◆ If not increased membership, then need to get community involvement
- ◆ Eco-tourism - people/problems
- ◆ Need for round-table forums after each quarterly meeting for exchange of ideas.
- ◆ Shorter general meetings to allow for the above. This

could be facilitated by reports in writing for newsletter or website instead of using meeting time.

- ❖ Agendas for committee meetings to be emailed or faxed prior to meeting (saves time)
- ❖ PICS must get better known, not just for objecting to planning permit applications.
- ❖ Need for promotion of grassroots groups in individual local communities focusing on local environmental issues.
- ❖ PICS history needs to be shared in small doses NOW! Perhaps put together as a Power Point presentation.

Christine Grayden and Margaret Johnson

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## PHILLIP ISLAND & SAN REMO DESIGN

### FRAMEWORK

#### IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE

The first meeting of this Committee was held on May 31st. The Committee's job is to prioritise the recommendations of the Design Framework so that the necessary Amendments can be prepared for inclusion in the Planning Scheme. The members of the Committee are:

Councillors Ross Fairhurst, Loretta Leslie & Kelly Simraj; Shire staff: Stephen Foster, Andrew Mason, Mark Simpson, Paul Smith. Committee members: Ewen Cameron (Ventnor), Peter Dann (PINP), Jan Fleming (Surf Beach), Margaret Hancock (Cowes), Deborah Holland (Ventnor), Penny Manning (Newhaven), Ann Penaluna (Rhyll), Peter Salisbury (Ventnor).

Disappointingly, the Shire received no nominations from San Remo. The next meeting will be held on June 28th.

Margaret Hancock.

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## CHILDREN'S ENVIRONMENT MORNINGS

Following a suggestion made by Ethel Temby at the Forum that I run children's sessions similar to the very successful Storytime Sessions I ran for Friends of Phillip Island Library some years ago, Ethel's daughter Gillian Armstrong and I have put together a trial program of Children's Environment Mornings. These will run on, mainly the second

Saturday of the month at the Meeting Room in the Heritage Centre from 11 am - 12 noon, commencing on July 24th.

The idea is for the children (age kinder to 8 yrs) to have fun, learn something about the environment, and enjoy some different art/craft activities related to the topic each month. Our first session will be on Koalas, and will feature Patsy Hunt as speaker, a story, looking at some non-fiction books together, perhaps examining a mounted specimen from the KCC, and then some art/craft. Local artist and former art teacher Maree Forsyth has offered to help, but we do need more helpers for various sessions.

The full program, detailing all the activities for each session, is available from me (PH: 5956 8501, or email: [cgrayden@waterfront.net.au](mailto:cgrayden@waterfront.net.au) ) Please see [Dates](#) for your Diary and the [Events](#) section of the website for topics and dates each month from July - Jan 2005. Note that for legal reasons an adult is to stay in the building with their children, so this may be a good way to reach others in the community.

Paul Smith, head of the Bass Coast Shire Environment Department has generously provided sponsorship funding for this environmental project. This grant will cover the cost of room hire and materials for the entire program. PICS appreciates this support in helping to make these sessions free to the public.

Christine Grayden

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## **WE NEED YOUR RECYCLABLES!**

NEEDED ASAP for the Saturday sessions art/craft activities: flower/animal pattern gift wrap paper, unwanted gift cards, fabric and yarn scraps, very small flower pots, flower catalogues, unwanted cellophane (crinkled up doesn't matter), interesting packaging (eg, boxes, moulded plastic, protective packing peanuts, etc). Please contact Christine if you can help with any of these items.

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## **PLASTIC BAGS GRADUALLY DIMINISHING**

Those of us who regularly shop in Cowes and Wonthaggi will have noticed more and more [Green Bags](#) and calico bags being taken into stores by shoppers. People do seem to be slowly getting the message. Checkout personnel are also asking shoppers if they really need a plastic bag for large items such as bulk-pack toilet paper and soft drinks in

cardboard containers that already have their own handles. Coles is also currently trialling sturdy, reusable (and of course recyclable) paper bags and calico bags as a cheaper option for shoppers to the Green Bags.

An increasing number of local businesses are also prominently displaying calico bags. Cowes IGA is stocking fold-up Green Bags as a fundraiser for Warley Hospital. These are great to use, then just fold up and pop straight back into your bag for next time. We also have several cane basket outlets in Cowes for people who prefer a really sturdy option. Bin liners are now available at Coles in the 140 litre Council rubbish bin size, so you can cut down on putting all those supermarket bags out with rubbish in them.

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## WHAT CAN I REALLY RECYCLE IN BASS COAST SHIRE?

The Bass Coast Shire Council's informative web site ([www.basscoast.vic.gov.au](http://www.basscoast.vic.gov.au)) has a section on recycling which lists the following as acceptable: glass (not flat or broken), aluminium, metal (eg, steel food cans), plastic with numbers 1 & 2 in the triangle, (but NO COLOURED PLASTIC PLEASE), paper and cardboard.

Contamination is one of the biggest problems the contractor faces. Things that people put in their recycle bins that they shouldn't include: household waste, broken glass, green waste, shoes, clothes, fabrics, children's toys, timber or building materials, oil and paint, sheet plastic, PLASTIC BAGS, nappies, electronic equipment and dead animals!!

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## READ THE FINE PRINT FIRST!

A recent holiday home purchaser has contacted us with some disturbing information. It seems that she has been fined \$300 for, in part, lopping of mirror bush (shiny leaf, Coprosma) and Sweet Pittosporum as the cutting of these plants is currently considered to require a permit under the Planning Scheme. Schedule 2 To the Vegetation Protection Overlay, part 3.0 states:

*A permit is required to remove, destroy or lop any of the following vegetation:*

*A tree which has a trunk or main stem with a girth of at least 30 centimetres measured 30 centimetres above ground level*

There are various exceptions to this that are listed in 42.02-2 **Permit Required** in 42.02 Vegetation Protection Overlay, but apparently the Council officers dealing with the case did not think they applied in this case.

The holiday home owner pointed out to the officers that the Shire's booklet: *Common Weeds of Gippsland, Bass Coast Shire* specifically identifies these plants as **Environmental Weeds** and gives careful and detailed instructions on how to remove them, without saying anything about the requirement for a permit. Moreover, both the Department of Primary Industries and Landcare co-sponsored the booklet, and when contacted both organizations were of the opinion that it was fine to remove these species without a permit.

Cr Loretta Leslie tells us that the wording in the Overlay is to be changed some time in the future so that householders wishing to eradicate environmental weeds from their properties will not be required to seek a permit. However, for the time being, it is necessary to apply for a permit to avoid a fine. Our informant's permit stated that replacement plants must be **locally sourced**. This actually means **INDIGENOUS** to Phillip Island, not that you can just go and get any plants from a local nursery. Thank goodness for the Barb Martin Bush Bank!

Anyone wishing to view any part of the Planning Scheme and who has access to the Internet can find our Planning Scheme at:  
[www.dse.vic.gov.au/planningschemes/basscoast/home.html](http://www.dse.vic.gov.au/planningschemes/basscoast/home.html) or at your local Bass Coast service centre.

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## RED ROCKS COAST ACTION

An application for \$3000 has been made to the Department of Sustainability and Environment to complete the upper section of the Penguin Rocks stairs. This is to be a graded walkway and viewing area suitable for disabled access.

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## WESTERN PORT MARINE NATIONAL PARKS

From the website <http://parks.camping.com.au> comes this descriptive information:

**Western Port, Victoria's** second largest bay, is a biological treasure-trove. Largely concealed behind a shoreline veil of marshland and mangroves, its waters contain expansive tidal flats, meadows of seagrass, deep channels, rocky reefs and sandy plains. The result is an abundance of marine life.

Numerous small animals live in the mud and seagrass beds. Fish gorge themselves on these animals and waterbirds feast on them all. With every low tide, some 270 square kilometres of shallow mud flats are exposed, revealing a feeding ground for thousands of wading birds. Western Port is recognized as one of the world's precious areas for wading birds. Lured from a Siberian winter by sunshine and food, over 30 bird species make the journey from north Asia to Western Port annually.

The marine national park system protects the essence of Western Port. The serene waters of Yaringa Marine National Park, in the north of the bay, preserve the connection between mangroves and mud flats, so important for roosting waterbirds. The French Island Marine National Park, in the centre, protects extensive seagrass beds that have largely disappeared elsewhere in the bay. The Churchill Island Marine National Park is representative of the south, influenced in part by the nearby open coast. This park hosts beds of lamp shells, a primitive ovoid shell that can occur in large numbers in sheltered sites with strong water flow. Pipefish and sea-hares abound. All three parks contain significant roosting sites and foraging areas for waders and other waterbirds.

Of the Churchill Island Marine National Park, the author of this site states:

Churchill Island Marine National Park is 670 hectares located on the Eastern Shore of Phillip Island in Western Port. It includes seagrass beds, mangroves, mudflats and sandy beaches. Part of the Western Port Ramsar site, it contains significant roosting and feeding sites for migratory waders. Some of its mudflats are of state significance and others that are the primary foraging areas for migratory waders are nationally significant.

**Lamp Shell (*Magellania flavescens*):** If you dive into the sheltered channels of the Churchill Island Marine National Park you will see a silty seafloor covered by thousands of lamp shells or brachiopods. These are living examples of an extremely ancient group of animals that have been part of the ocean world for over 600 million years. When turned upside down brachiopods resemble ancient Roman oil lamps and some people consider that it was the animal itself that provided the inspiration to the craftsmen. With their hinged shells partly agape, lamp shells draw water into their body, straining it for suspended microscopic food swept in on the tidal currents. More than 30,000 fossil species of lamp shells are known, although there are only some 350 species worldwide today. The Australian fauna is among the most diverse with its 39 different species.

◆ Sea Hare (*Aplysia* species): Sea Hares periodically appear in great numbers on the seagrass beds of Western Port. Here they mate and lay tangled threads of yellow egg ribbons that resemble noodles amongst the seagrass fronds. They have an exceptional talent for reproduction, with a single animal being a male at its front end and a female at its rear. This enables sea hares to form group mating chains that result in the production of millions of eggs. Sea Hares are herbivorous, eating seaweeds and seagrasses. Some species can take on the colour of the species that they are eating. The name Sea Hare is imaginatively drawn from the resemblance of the animal's eye-spots to the large ears of the hare. The whole life cycle of the Sea Hare occurs within one year.

◆ Looking After the Park: For the protection of the marine environment, a number of activities are prohibited within the boundaries of Victoria's marine national parks and marine sanctuaries. No fishing, netting, spearing, taking or killing of marine life. All methods of fishing, from the shore or the sea, are prohibited. ◆

Next time you drive across the bridge to Churchill Island, think how fortunate we are to have the sea adjoining the island protected, as well as the island itself.

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## FRIENDS OF CHURCHILL ISLAND

Thanks to Julie Box who has been PICS representative on FOCIS for some years. Unfortunately due to commitments at her Warley Avenue Bookstore, Julie is unable to attend FOCIS meetings, so Christine Grayden has taken her place at present. If any PICS member would like to take on the role of PICS representative on FOCIS they are welcome to do so. Please contact Christine on 5956 8501 to let her know. Meetings are once every two months on a Saturday afternoon and usually include a speaker. The next meeting is the AGM on 24th July, followed by the committee meeting on 25th September.

In common with other parts of the Phillip Island Nature Park, Churchill Island has been undergoing an intensive review of its operations. The recent report *Churchill Island Farm Management Plan 2004* (Draft #2 4th April 2004, Author: Amy Benham) made numerous recommendations about the farming operations on Churchill Island, including:

◆ The Farm: The philosophy of farming will change on Churchill Island. It will begin to be managed as a model farm using the best modern farming

techniques that will help to make Churchill (sic) more sustainable. The Churchill Island farm will also aim to gain some level of organic certification."

FOCIS had major reservations about some of these recommendations and has been in discussion with management to reach a compromise. Unfortunately Churchill Island operates at a loss at present, and the Board would like to try various ways to make the Island more self-sufficient, including basing the farming on permaculture and producing food (including meat) which can be sold through the cafe and shop, and introducing registration of livestock to make sale easier. Increasing the volunteer base to do a wider variety of daily tasks eg, milking the cow (Ayrshire, coming), churning butter, spinning, baking bread, etc, and helping with the renovation of the half cellar - will also add to the visitor experience and reduce running costs.

Churchill Island is certainly a beautiful place to spend time, any time. Volunteering there is extremely rewarding as it is virtually impossible to find any visitors in a bad mood! If you wish to join FOCIS, contact the Membership & General Secretary, Jill Fitzroy Kelly, ph 5672 5235.

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## ORGANIC AND NATURAL LIVING

Anyone with a particular interest in this topic may wish to attend a lecture by Alf Orpen on Thursday, 24th June, 7.15 p.m. at the Meeting Room, Heritage Centre, Cowes. Sponsored by Angel's Health Foods, Cowes, Orpen will talk about toxins and synthetic chemicals in foods, synthetic pesticides, G.M. foods, Certified Organics, and will discuss Real and immediate solutions for a healthier society.

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## PHILLIP ISLAND LIBRARY

The following videos are available:

From The Australian (Horticultural) Correspondence School:

1. Plant Propagation. 1hr 20 mins. The production is not high quality and the tape has been played many, many times, but the information is excellent. Covers: types of propagation; hygiene; selecting healthy plant material for propagation; how to sow and water in seed; taking different types of cuttings; demonstrations of budding, grafting, division and aerial layering; greenhouses, hotbeds, misting & fogging, with a fascinating tour of a propagation-through-to-tubestock nursery.

Highly recommended.

2. Flowering Australian Native Plants. 43 mins. Again, not the best of production, with some rough editing, but also full of information. This is essentially a plant identification guide for many Australian native shrubs, and gives some hints on cultivation. All plants are shown flowering.

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## MEMBERS ON THE MOVE

On tour at present are Gillian Collins, in the United States for 3 months, Graeme Burgan, travelling through Western Australia and the Northern Territory for a few months and Sandy Shively and Tim Patkin are sailing off the Queensland coast. Lucky them!

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## YOUR PICS COMMITTEE

The PICS Committee, elected at the last AGM, meets once a month to discuss issues of immediate concern to conservation on Phillip Island. These meetings are very informative and challenging. Members are welcome to attend at 8 pm on the first Friday of each month in either the Heritage Centre or Cultural Centre, Cowes.

**The elected committee for 2004 is:**

<b>President</b>	Margaret Hancock (Ph/Fax 5952-2557)
<b>Senior Vice President</b>	Rose Thomas (on leave)
<b>Secretary</b>	Margaret Johnson
<b>Minutes Secretary</b>	Bruce Howe
<b>Treasurer</b>	Gillian Collins (Ph 5956 8840)
<b>Other Members</b>	Anne Davie, Penny Manning, Greg Johnson, John Jansson, Julie Box
<b>Other PICS Responsibilities:</b>	
<b>Newsletter</b>	Christine Grayden/John Eddy (Ph 5956 8501; Fax 5956 8314; <a href="mailto:cgrayden@waterfront.net.au">cgrayden@waterfront.net.au</a> )

<b>Meeting notices and publicity</b>	Rose Thomas (on leave)
<b>Ventnor Public Land Committee</b>	Gillian Collins
<b>Red Rocks Coast Action Project</b>	Gillian Collins
<b>South Coast Walking Track</b>	Penny Manning
<b>Bike Paths</b>	Penny Manning
<b>Friends of Churchill Island Liaison</b>	Chritine Grayden
<b>Barb Martin Bushbank Liaison</b>	Anne Davie
<b>Membership Officer</b>	Morag Mackay (Ph 5678 2240)
<b>Landcare Salinity Committee</b>	John Jansson
<b>Website Manager</b>	Diane Baird ( <a href="mailto:dianebaird@yahoo.com">dianebaird@yahoo.com</a> )
<b>Grant Investigation</b>	Tim Patkin

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## And also

The hard copy of our newsletter contains some items that may not be included in the online version. The PICS newsletter is available at the Phillip Island Library.

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