



# The Penguin

Newsletter of Phillip Island Conservation Society Second Quarter,  
June 2008



Newsletter

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## Dates for your Diary

**Sat Jul 5 - PICS General Meeting**, 8 pm Meeting room, Heritage Centre, Cowes. There 's so much happening on the planning front for Bass Coast Shire at present that we will have Angelo D 'Costa, Development Services Manager of the Council 's Planning Department to come and explain it all for us.

**Sat Jul 12 - WESBOC AGM**, 10am, Rhyll Hall. Contact Bessie 5956 9401 or Helen 5956 9280.

**Sat Jul 19 - Churchill Island Planting Day**, 10am-12 noon, Visitor Centre environs. Morning tea provided. Dress accordingly. Enqs: Jill Allen 5956 7109.

**Sat Jul 26 - Friends of Churchill Island AGM**, 1.30pm, Education Room, Churchill Island Enqs: Jill Allen 5956 7109.

**Sun Jul 27- NB CHANGE OF DATE! Working Bee**, Planting at Red Rocks. Meet at car park 10 a.m. Tools and gloves provided.

**Sat Aug 16 - Seasonal Walk**. Peter Dann, head of research at PINP, will show us the Penguin Parade volunteers/research and education centre and plans for the rehabilitation centre. Take sharp left turn just before Penguin Parade car park entry and follow track in to car park. 2pm.

**Thurs Aug 29 - EDO WORKSHOP on VCAT Planning & Environment Appeals**, 2-4pm. Registration is essential! Limit of 15-20 people. contact Christine Grayden 5956 8501, email: [carayden@waterfront.net.au](mailto:carayden@waterfront.net.au)

**Sat Sep 27 - PICS General Meeting**, 8 pm Meeting Room, Heritage Centre, Cowes. Speaker TBA

**Sun Sep 28 - Working Bee**, Planting at Red Rocks, 10 am.

**Sat Oct 4 - Children's Environment Morning**, 2008-09 season program TBA.

**Sat Nov 1 - Children's Environment Morning**.

**Sat Nov 15 - Seasonal Walk**, McHaffie 's Lagoon. 2 pm.

**Sat Dec 6 - Children's Environment Morning**.

**Sat Jan 10 - PICS A.G.M.**

**Sun Jan 11 - Working Bee**, Red Rocks.

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**Barb Martin Bush Bank:** Sales and volunteers - every Wednesday plus 1<sup>st</sup> 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):** Phone Sec Jill Allen: 5956 7109, or email: [nellaa32@waterfront.net.au](mailto:nellaa32@waterfront.net.au). Meeting dates: 19.1.08; 29.3;24.5; AGM 26.7 - 1 p.m., Visitors ' Centre, Churchill Island.

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## FROM THE PRESIDENT

**Dear Members,**

Forty years on! What an enjoyable celebratory weekend we had, with not too much formality and lots of time to talk with old friends and meet new ones. All the arrangements went well and thanks must go to all the people

who helped in so many different ways — there was even enough food for us to have a sort of "spontaneous afternoon tea " after the Sunday afternoon performance of the "Ancient Mariner ".

I was very impressed by the speech made by Kay Setches as she launched *An Island Worth Conserving*. Kay 's account of events when she was Minister for conservation, her overview of conservation issues from a Victorian State level, and her knowledge of Phillip Island as a long-term holiday home owner. have provided much for us to consider.

The VCAT decision on the Linfox proposal for a golf course and housing accommodation adjacent to the Race Track is worth reading. The Tribunal members obviously listened very carefully to all that was said, and made their judgment accordingly. We now have a respite while the proponents prepare a new Application. Thank you to everyone who managed to come to the Hearing; it was good to have you there, and good to have time for lunch in the sunshine by the river on most days. Special thanks must go to Marg Johnson who has done an amazing amount of work in co-ordinating our efforts with the Environment Defenders Office, the legal team, the expert witnesses and the other submitters.

Some of us were privileged to attend an EDO workshop held in Cowes earlier in the year — "Understanding Biodiversity Law". This is one in a series of three workshops which the EDO is organising throughout Victoria under its objective of providing training, development and support for community groups. Another EDO workshop will be held on Thursday August 28th on VCAT Planning & Environment Appeals. Contact Christine Grayden 5956 8501 or email [cgrayden@waterfront.net.au](mailto:cgrayden@waterfront.net.au) to register your interest. The final workshop on Vegetation will be held later in the year — details next newsletter.

Angelo D'Costa, Development Services Manager from the Bass Coast Planning Department will be speaking at our next General Meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> July. This will be a great opportunity for us to ask questions about the proposed Structure Plans for Silverleaves, Cowes and Ventnor. The Structure Plans include proposed boundaries which will prevent further urban encroachment on rural land. It is anticipated that Planning Panels Victoria will be hearing submissions at Cowes within the next few months.

Two public information sessions have been held about the proposed recycling facility in Gap Road. The establishment of such a facility is an essential step in the closure of the "Rhyll Tip", and the inclusion of that land in the Phillip Island Nature Park. Before the Gap Rd facility can be established, the land has to be rezoned from "Rural" to "Special Use", so that is another matter for consideration by Planning Panels Victoria.

For almost 40 years "the Tip" has been consistently on the PICS agenda, (see chapter 6 "A Load of Rubbish", in *An Island Worth Conserving*) so it will be great to be able to cross it off, and then co-operate with the Nature Park in the reclamation of the tip site. So — on we go!

With best wishes,

**Margaret Hancock, President.**

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## Red Rocks Coast Action

We finally received Envirofund grant monies of \$15, 725 on 2 April, following an application submitted by Derek Hibbert and myself. The money will be used to complete the staircase at the western end on the car park with a ramp, some fencing (to stop incursion onto the foredune from the beach), brush matting and planting of 250 or so plants from Barb Martin Bush Bank. This is the last of the Envirofund grants, as the program has been discontinued.

We are awaiting confirmation from our contractor, Bryan Westwood, as to when he can do the ramp. Permission has been granted from a representative of the Bunurong Land Council. Our next working bee will be held on Sunday July 27, which is a change of date and will proceed whether or not the ramp is started. This will be a planting day. Hopefully we will have some rain to help our plants along!

*Christine Grayden*

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## TAX DEDUCTIBLE DONATION

This is the time of year when many people think about making a tax deductible donation to an organisation that agrees with their own philosophy. Did you know that so far more than 90 people have made tax deductible donations to the PICS Public Fund? Without their help we would not have been able to mount such a strong case in the VCAT Linfox hearing, as our Public Fund was used to pay our two excellent Expert Witnesses. "Advocacy of the Environment " is one of the acceptable criteria for use of environmental Public Fund monies. There are other uses too — all aimed at protecting and enhancing the environment. If you would like to contribute directly to the protection and enhancement of the Phillip Island environment, you can certainly do just that by donating to the PICS Public Fund.

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

With thanks, *Christine Grayden*, Treasurer

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## A Safe Climate Future?

At the recent Sustainability Living Festival at San Remo on 31<sup>st</sup> May, PICS member and Convenor of the Bass Coast Climate Action Group, Bob Thompson, gave the opening address on the subject of Climate Change. Bob made a compelling case for viewing our present global situation as being one of Climate Emergency. Rapidly accelerating loss of Arctic sea ice and the Greenland Ice Shelf, all too clearly seen in satellite images over the past eight years, provides indisputable evidence of the effects of global warming and the likelihood of large-scale sea level rises.

Arctic summer ice has declined in area by more than 40% since 2001 and International Panel on Climate Change predictions suggesting it will be all gone by 2100 now seem wildlife optimistic — it could be as soon as 2020! "If the Arctic Ice is the global equivalent to the canary in the coal mine — watch out! The canary has died!" stated Bob.

Permafrost, occupying vast areas of Canada, Alaska and Russia, is also melting, releasing huge quantities of methane: a far more potent greenhouse gas than CO<sub>2</sub>. Ominously, the 'awakening giant' of the Antarctic is also showing signs of melting. We could be facing a foreseeable future where sea levels rise globally one metre every 20 years. Throughout the world, there are huge assets around coastlines less than one metre above present sea levels so the prospects are frightening.

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Bob pointed out that, on a per capita basis, the USA and Australia are the two worst emitters of greenhouse gasses. Yet much can be done to meet the emergency, and the Bass Coast Climate Action Group and the broader Climate Emergency Network are committed to outlining what our objectives should be, and the best ways to achieve a safe climate future for all people, all species and all generations.

In pre-industrial times, the level of CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere was 230 parts per million (ppm). Now it is 385 ppm. We should aim to cut back to 320 ppm, and Bob claims this is achievable with current technologies. What is needed is the political and social will with leadership at all levels of government. We need to respond as in a national, and global, emergency, such as for a world war.

Among the practical measures being advocated by the Climate Emergency Network, Bob listed the following things government should do

- Declaration of a state of emergency
- A powerful public education campaign
- Aim for zero emissions
- Large-scale investment in renewable energy
- Government-sponsored deployment of existing effective energy efficiency measures
- A revolutionary public transport system
- No subsidies for cars or coal mining

In addition, each person can:

- Spread the message throughout the community
- Demand action from government
- Minimise our own carbon footprint, especially planning travel
- Take action at work to reduce greenhouse gasses
- Support the local Climate Action Group and the Climate Emergency Network

*John Eddy*

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## WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY & SUSTAINABILITY EXPO

PICS once more participated in the World Environment Day schools expo run over two days at the San Remo Recreation Centre. This year it was followed immediately by the inaugural Sustainability Festival for our part of Bass Coast Shire, funded mainly by a grant for Urban Landcare. About 480 children attended the expo, and approx 170 people attended the Festival, so both events were well worth the considerable effort of all involved.

The theme for this year's World Environment Day was "CO<sub>2</sub>: Kick the Habit". I decided that PICS should mount a display based on "Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Rethink" in ways that would appeal to both children and adults so that the display did not need to be changed for the Saturday. For "Reduce" I focused on replacing plastic singlet bags with reusable bags, and an attractive variety of the latter were displayed along with photographic material from the internet showing the effects of plastic bags on wildlife. For "Reuse" I displayed several containers reused as other containers and toys, including a prize-winning recycled car which had gone the longest distance in competition and when tested by several children easily went the width of the rec centre on the carpet! "Recycle" featured a number of organic fertilisers, compost, and — the hit of the

featured a number of organic fertilisers, compost, and — the hit of the display — a darkened container of composting worms which the children were able to view with magnifying glasses under supervision, and which were changed daily. "Rethink" featured a photographic/word montage of practical ways everyday families can reduce their CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

The PICS display worked well, with most children spending five minutes or so each, looking at the objects and photographs, and, of course, the worms, and smelling all the yucky organic material — chook manure (Organic Lifter), partly rotted compost, blood and bone and seaweed fertiliser. (Thanks to "Ready, Set, Grow Nursery", Cowes)

The grade 4-6 children were asked to find three ways of "Kicking the Habit" in our display. Some of their answers included:

- Reduce your rubbish
- Reuse everyday things
- If possible make a compost heap
- Some packaging can be reused as containers
- Get a water tank
- Leave car at home and walk or use public transport if you can
- Don't use spray-on deodorant
- Don't use plastic bags
- Buy green energy
- Join children up in a walking school bus if possible
- Invest in solar hot water
- When buying another car look for one with less than 10 litres per 100 km fuel economy
- Don't litter
- Turn TV off when not in use
- Turn computer off overnight
- Turn power points off when you're not using them
- Recycle paper
- Start a worm farm
- Dress properly for the weather
- Buy an electric car
- Travel together to save petrol
- Stop chopping down the forests

My heartfelt thanks to Bob Thompson, Malcolm Brodie, John and Karen Eddy, who stayed on and helped the organising team pack up the rec centre after the WED Expo/Sustainability Festival. It was a huge job!

*Christine Grayden*

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## **NEW RESEARCH, ENVIRONMENT & EDUCATION CENTRE FOR PINP**

Staff at the PINP now have new facilities to work in. The Research, Environment and Education Centre was officially opened by the Minister for Environment and Climate Change, Gavin Jennings, on 10<sup>th</sup> May. The centre consists of three separate buildings joined by raised walkways in a landscaped natural setting, located near the works area east of the main car park.

Invited guests and interested members of the community, including a number of PICS members, gathered in the new education centre for the occasion, which was also notable for the significant protest rally against the proposed desalination plant. This protest, by about 100 vocal protesters of all ages, many carrying signs, was directed at the Minister.

Against the noisy background, PINP CEO Mark Manteit, opened proceedings and was followed by chairman of the PINP Board, David Beatty, who outlined recent developments in facilities at the Nature Park, of which the new buildings are the latest phase. There are now seven full-time research staff, and twelve PhD students that need to be accommodated. The Nature Park's commitment extends beyond penguins to the Island's flora and fauna in general and maintenance of the environment.

The Minister, Gavin Jennings, first paid tribute to the Bunurong as traditional owners of the land, and reiterated the importance of good research facilities in providing the best knowledge on which to base management of habitat as a tourist resource. He acknowledged the success of the PINP in harnessing its fantastic ecotourism potential to get the message across to people from all over the world, as demonstrated by the various awards the Nature Park had received in recent years. The Minister then declared the new facilities open, and unveiled a plaque commemorating the occasion.

Despite the importance of the day, the opening was overshadowed by the noisy, passionate and effective Desal demonstration. The Minister

apparently consented to demonstrators occupying the carpark adjacent to the new facilities during the opening, and met with them afterwards to listen to their concerns. During his official speech, in conciliatory mood, he acknowledged the protestors and their right to voice their opposition. The protestors were not intending to be disrespectful to the official opening or those invited to it, he said, but their actions were directed solely at him.

The many signs waved by protestors ensured the message got through on the evening TV news coverage, as did the continuous chanting. Among others, some of the chants heard were: **"At what cost?" "Recycle our Water and save marine life". "No Desal". "How many penguins will be left?" "Little penguins say goodbye." "Thanks for opening the penguin museum"!**

We hope the Minister conveyed these legitimate concerns to the Premier. Our next "seasonal walk" will be a guided tour of the facilities with Research Manager Peter Dann. See dates section for details.

*John Eddy*

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## ***An Island Worth Conserving: A History of the Phillip Island Conservation Society 1968-2008***

If you don't have your copy of the official PICS history yet, you can order it and have it posted to you. Send \$20 per book + \$5 per 1-2 copies postage to The Treasurer, PO Box 548, COWES, 3922. Cheques and money orders to be made payable to Phillip Island Conservation Society Inc. Include your name and address. You can use the [online form](#) for your

include your name and address. You can use the [online form](#) for your order. Thanks!

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## Minutes of General Meeting held March 29, 2008

**1. Welcome.** The President, M. Hancock, opened the meeting at 8.04 pm, welcomed everyone, in particular the guest speaker Bob Baird who made good use of Earth Hour <http://www.earthhour.org/> (8-9 pm) with the assistance of John Eddy and Christine Grayden's solar powered lighting which provided sufficient illumination for his fascinating talk on Hooded Plovers <http://www.birdsaustralia.com.au/our-projects/beach-nesting-birds.html> on the Island.

**2. Vote of thanks** was given by the President and applauded by those present.

**3. Attendance.**As per attendance book.

**4. Apologies.** G. &M. Johnson, A. Davie, M. Cleeland and as per attendance book.

**5. Minutes of the previous General Meeting, 12 January 2008,** as circulated in Newsletter, accepted.

**Moved:** G. Cleeland **Seconded:** J. Eddy **Carried.**

**6. Business Arising.**Nil or to come up later.

**7. Correspondence** n/a (Secretary absent)

'Review of the Bass Coast Planning Scheme' response to be tabled.<http://www.dse.vic.gov.au/planningschemes/basscoast/home.html>

**8. Treasurer's Report.** 29.3.08

### General Account

Opening Balance: 10,654.19

Income: 1,610.00+

Expenditure: 4,260.19-

Balance at Bank: 8,003.98cr

Encumbered Funds: 5,470.20

Available Funds: 2,338.33cr

### Public Fund

Opening Balance: 8,066.50

Donations: 1,294.00+

Expenditure: 8,315.00-

Balance: 1,045.50cr

1. Payments for the two Expert witnesses for the Linfox case came from both the Fighting Fund and after consultation between the three

...and the Fighting Fund, and, after consultation between the three  
Authorised Persons for the Public Fund — Margaret Hancock, Robyn  
Dyall and Penny Manning — from the Public Fund under the "Advocacy  
for the Environment" criteria.

2. Reimbursements for M. Johnson (General A/C) and C Grayden (Pub  
Fund) for Linfox matters were due to Bernadette George (expert witness  
for Linfox case) insisting on cash transfer for payment. These were done  
by Marg and Christine from their private accounts, and they then had to be  
reimbursed with cheques.

3. Due to the amount of GST we needed to pay the Expert Witnesses, I felt  
it best for us to re-register with the ATO for GST purposes, and this has  
been done. I am currently trying to have our BAS changed from annual to  
quarterly so that we can get the GST back ASAP. I haven't calculated it  
yet, but it should be about \$900.00. Since most of it came from the Public  
Fund I will bank the ATO cheque when it arrives into the Pub Fund A/C.

4. Since the balance for the Children's Environment Mornings is now under  
\$10, I would like to ask that an extra \$100.00 be made available from  
general funds for materials for the next few seasons — i.e. be transferred  
to the CEM column in Encumbered Funds.

5. On behalf of PICS I am currently organising an all-day EDO  
Environmental legislation workshop to be held at the Heritage Centre  
meeting room on Tuesday April 29. The hire is about \$40. I would ask that  
PICS cover this cost. It will be the only cost to us for the workshop. We so  
far have 9 members attending.

It was *moved*, O. Bolitho, *seconded*, J. Eddy, that PICS use  
'the giving site'

[http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/giving/how\\_to\\_list\\_appeal.jsp](http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/giving/how_to_list_appeal.jsp)

as a further means of obtaining funds for the work of the  
Society.

'Thank you for your interest in setting up your  
donations facility through  
[www.ourcommunity.com.au](http://www.ourcommunity.com.au) which will allow you to  
take credit card donations seven days a week, 24  
hours a day. Along with collecting donations via the  
internet, you will also be able to promote donating  
by phone, fax, post and leaving a bequest to your  
organisation.

This donations facility is a commission-free service  
offered by Our Community — we take NO  
commission or fees for this service. The only online  
donations fees that will be incurred by you are the  
credit card fees taken by the bank.

You also own all your data — Our Community does  
not use any of the donor details in any way and our  
systems have secure encryption for donor  
protection.'

It was *moved*, J. Fleming, *seconded*, Olga Bolitho, that the  
Treasurer be reimbursed for expenses relating to the  
publication of her PICS history.

It was *moved*, J. Fleming, *seconded*, L. Meredith, that \$100.00 be transferred from General Funds to the Children's Environment Morning column in Encumbered Funds.

It was *moved*, C. Grayden, *seconded*, J. Jansson, that PICS cover the cost (about \$40.00) of the Heritage Centre Meeting Room hire for the EDO Environmental Legislation Workshop to be held on Tuesday April 29.

**Moved:** C. Grayden, **Seconded:** B. Tyers, **Carried**

#### 9. PICS History Report: Christine Grayden 29.3.08

A report was given detailing the activities of the subcommittee and printer, and inviting everyone to the launch and 40<sup>th</sup> birthday celebrations on Saturday May 24<sup>th</sup> at the Parish Hall. The hall will be open for the public to view displays and a performance of the Rime of the ancient Mariner on Sunday May 25<sup>th</sup>.

#### 10. General Business.

##### 1. EDO workshop 29/4

2. 40<sup>th</sup> celebrations 24/25 May. M. Brodie suggested that his performance troupe might assist with fundraising on the Sunday afternoon. He will submit his thoughts to the President.

3. Linfox — M. Johnson's report in *The Advertiser*. The President reported that PICS got 'a fair hearing' at VCAT before Helen Gibson and Margaret Baird. The Shire's legal representative was 'worth the rates' and the 'baby barristers' all did very well. Ros Jessup for the Nature Park was great. If the development goes ahead, it will be done in stages over 8 years beginning with the construction of an administration block and lodges, then timeshare units, further timeshare units, a 9-hole golf course, more timeshare units, then more timeshare units, another 9 holes, then a smaller hotel. The land is in 4-5 titles under the names of various Linfox subsidiaries. The Shire wants amalgamation of titles. Two tribunal members will be attending an event at the track to see how it all works. If the decision goes against Linfox, they can mount a Supreme Court challenge if it is 'wrong in law'. The honesty and transparency of various witnesses was refreshing. The expert witnesses were 'value for money' and handled the 'blood-sport' of cross-examination well. Linfox had retained a QC for 18 months.

4. J. Fleming raised the subject of building construction occurring near the mutton-bird nests at Surf Beach while the birds are still here. Neither the Shire nor the Nature Park seems willing to take responsibility. It was queried whether Anne Oswin or Gareth Barlow were aware of the situation. It was *moved*, J. Fleming, *seconded*, C. Grayden, that a letter be sent to DSE, BCSC and PINP detailing the activities taking place at Lot C, 200 The Esplanade, Surf Beach.

5. C. Grayden reported on that afternoon's meeting of FOCIS members which was addressed at length by Mark Manteit, CEO of PINP, who shot the Sentinel-Times messenger but not the message outlining projected expenditure of \$22m, some of which is to fund further building on Churchill Island, an 'Education Centre' to cater for 250 visitors.

6. **Next General Meeting** 5<sup>th</sup> July 2008, 8.00 pm, Cowes Cultural Centre.

7 **Working Bee** Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> March 2008 10 am at Five Waves Weeding

7. Working Day Sunday 30 March 2008, to all at five ways. Weeding and rubbish removal. Bring gloves and bags.

13. The meeting closed at 9.50 pm.

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## PICS CONTACTS

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