



The Penguin

Newsletter of Phillip Island Conservation Society First
Quarter,
March 2007



Newsletter

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Dates for your Diary

(Check the dates: some have changed!)

Sat 31 Mar: **Children's Environment Morning:** 11am - 12 noon Meeting room, Heritage Centre, Cowes. Ranger Rebecca with animals that live in burrows.

Sat 14 Apr: **General Meeting.** Subject: tidal energy. Gary Campbell will speak on the San Remo Aquanator. 8 p.m. Meeting Room, Cowes.

Sun 15 Apr: **Working Bee:** Five Ways. Cleaning, weeding. Meet at 10 a.m. Refreshments provided.

Sat 5 May: **Children's Environment Morning:** 11am - 12 noon, Meeting Room, Heritage Centre, Cowes. PICS Mike Cleeland on "Dinosaur Habitat".

Sat 19 May: **Seasonal Walk:** Point Sambell, too hot in summer will be just right in May! Meet at the car park just past Cat Bay, 2 p.m.

Sat 2 June: **Children's Environment Morning:** 11am - 12 noon, Meeting Room, Heritage Centre, Cowes. Waterwatch Melanie with experiments. Last CEM for the season.

Sat 7 July: **General Meeting.** Port of Hastings update. 8 p.m.

Meeting Room, Heritage Centre, Cowes

Sun 8 July: **Working Bee:** Red Rocks Coast Action. Meet at Red Rocks car park, 10 a.m. BBQ to follow

Sat 18 Aug: **Seasonal Walk:** "Bimbadeen", a prize-winning Landcare property. Meet there on Back Beach Rd (between Pyramid Rock Rd and Berry Beach Rd, on north side) 2 p.m.

Sat 29 Sep: **General Meeting.** Wind and solar energy. Speakers TBA. 8 p.m. Meeting Room, Heritage Centre, Cowes.

Sun 30 Sep: **Working Bee:** Red Rocks Coast Action. Meet at Red Rocks car park, 10 a.m. BBQ to follow.

Sat 17 Nov: **Seasonal Walk:** Nobbies building and environs. Meet at main entrance 2 p.m.

Sat 20 Jan 2008 - the year of our 40th birthday!! **Annual General Meeting** 8 p.m. Meeting Room, Cowes.

Barb Martin Bush Bank: Sales and volunteers - every Wednesday plus 1st Saturday of each month 10 - 1. Phone Co-ordinator Bec 0407 348 807.

Friends of Koalas (FOK) Habitat Days: First Sat 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 Neil Beddoe, ph 5952 1575

Friends of Churchill Island (FOCIS): Phone Sec Jill Allen: 5956 7109, or email: nellaa32@waterfront.net.au

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Members,

2007 seems to be the year of BIG planning issues! The proposed Linfox development at Pyramid Rock has re-appeared in a different guise and is on its way to VCAT. Amendment C46, which includes the Vegetation Protection Overlay for Phillip Island, is on its way to Planning Panels Victoria. Under this proposed Amendment almost all

vegetation protection would be removed!

The proposal for the land-based developments related to the Port of Hastings get bigger and bigger! So far, the well being of Westernport as a whole has not been considered. So there is a great deal of research, reading and writing being done as submissions are prepared. My thanks go to all the PICS members who are hard at work on these issues.

Meantime the writing of the PICS History is proceeding at speed. All the written material and photographs are to be with our Editors, David and Jocelyn Bradley, by the end of September. If you have any old photographs of PICS' activities please contact me (ph/fax: 5952 2557) or Christine Grayden (5956 8501; email: cgrayden@waterfront.net.au)

I look forward to seeing you at the General Meeting in April.

With best wishes,

Margaret Hancock, President.

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PICS ANNUAL REPORT

Delivered 13.01.07

Well, here we go! This is the 38th Annual Report of the Phillip Island Conservation Society Inc for the year ending 31/01/07 — and suddenly the 40th BIRTHDAY is alarmingly near. The FORTIETH BIRTHDAY when (for the last TEN YEARS) it has been out intention to publish a history of PICS. As the years have passed we've all said: "We're too busy" or "We have more urgent things to do". BUT, now we do have some "Cash in Hand" — a \$4,000 grant from the Bass Coast Shire Council — and there is a firm commitment to publish the History in 2008. So there is a lot of work to be done by the sub-committee in the coming year. Our thanks go to Christine Grayden, Greg Fox and Frances Robertson who have already done a great deal of research. Also needed, of course, is an updated "Phillip Island in Picture and Story" to cover the whole of Phillip Island, whereas the **PICS History** will need to be firmly focused on PICS, its activities and concerns over the past 40 years.

A great many Committee and other meetings have been held during this year. It's a great help to the Committee to have

Gae Cleeland as our **Minute Secretary**, and also a great help that Gillian Collins continues to **represent PICS on matters relating to the Port of Hastings**.

One of the great joys each year is the **"Get Together" of environmental groups throughout the Shire**. In 2006 we met at Inverloch and shared each other's joys and despairs. This coming year we likely will gather at Corinella. I do encourage you all to come along and meet with other people whose aspirations we share.

Some of our members are active supporters of the **Bass Coast Branch of the National Trust**. Here is an opportunity for us to learn the technique of landscape classification, and I would commend Ross Lloyd's work in developing our skills. The National Trust is largely a group of volunteers, and it is essential that the volunteers in each municipality learn the criteria for landscape classification.

PICS continues general oversight of the **Five Ways Revegetation project**, whilst providing help with weeding and rubbish removal. It will be interesting to see how well the plantings in that area survive the current very dry conditions.

Of course, just by Five Ways is the **Barb Martin Bush Bank**. Anne Davie continues as PICS representative on its Committee of Management. Here is a copy of their most recent brochure. For those of us who knew Barb, the Bushbank is an ongoing joy, and how Barb would have loved it and its dedicated volunteers, who grew and distributed many thousands of indigenous plants in 2006. Anne will write a detailed report on the BMBB's activities for our second quarter newsletter.

Another group closely associated with the Bush Bank is Friends of Koalas. Patsy Hunt will give the report of their activities:

F.O.K.

This past year has been a difficult one for koalas and FOK because of the drought. Our Habitat Days have been restricted mainly to weeding, maintenance and work at the Bush Bank. Our schedule for 2007 includes some planting at Rowell Swamp as well as working at the KCC and Bush Bank and some weeding and maintenance at Oswin Roberts. Some new faces would be most welcome at Habitat Days — first Saturday of each month. FOK continues to comment on

planning matters and lodge submissions on various plans and reports. The pressure of development is increasing and causing great difficulty for the remaining 'free range' koalas and other wildlife. The idea of "Phillip Island Fauna Island" seems to have been forgotten as more and more events are held. Koala Watch Reports show that some koalas are 'hanging in there'.

FOK is represented on the Community Advisory Committee, which meets every second month at the Nature Park. The monthly koala counts at the KCC continue to be most enjoyable and usually well attended. Hopefully the year ahead will bring better rainfall and some sensible planning decisions to help Phillip Island's koalas survive. *Patsy Hunt*

Another area where volunteers have just "Got on the with Job" is at **Red Rocks. Our Coast Action** group has continued with planting, weed removal, and the seemingly unending job of picking up rubbish. We're slowly working our way towards Salt Water Creek. It's almost 20 years since the "Battle of Salt Water Creek"; so that's another anniversary, which is worth remembering!

Christine Grayden, John Eddy and Skye Winder continue the splendid work with the **Children's Environment Mornings**:

Numbers have been highly variable this season, though the children and parents who DO attend are as enthusiastic as ever. Graeme Burgan was a great help when he was our guest speaker but inadvertently ended up running the session by himself! We will see how numbers go for the rest of the season and then assess whether or not we run a fourth season. The main expense is the cost of room hire, which was not funded this year. *Christine Grayden*

Christine and John continue to edit *The Penguin*:

The newsletter has once again been produced quarterly, with emphasis on reporting our activities to members who are not able to attend. Our thanks to other contributors. Although space is limited, contributions directly relevant to Phillip Island are welcome. Costs have been reduced by printing most of the third edition at the office of Ken Smith, MLA, and the fourth edition at Cowes Primary School, which charged us greatly reduced rates in lieu of Christine's voluntary work at the school. We hope we can continue to produce the newsletter for lower cost in 2007. Members who receive their newsletter by email help postage costs. Our thanks to Moragh Mackay,

our Membership Officer, for providing labels each quarter, and for Peter Dann for delivering them. Thanks also to Diane Baird for placing the newsletter on our website, which she maintains generally for PICS.

Christine Grayden & John Eddy

Christine and John also organize our **Seasonal Walks**:

We had four seasonal walks, as per the seasons, in 2006: Through the Oswin Roberts Reserve with Patsy Hunt, the Mangrove Walk with John Eddy, Churchill Island with me, and on a Carnivorous Plant Hunt with George Caspar, organized by Mike Cleeland. We will also be having seasonal walks in 2007, and we encourage all members to come along. The walks are designed to be fairly easy going and our leaders are quite knowledgeable.

Christine Grayden & John Eddy

Near the beginning of this report I mentioned that a GREAT MANY meetings had been held during the year. To my mind, one of the most important of these was the **"Meet the Candidates"** before the Victorian State Election. It's interesting that our format for these meetings is now being followed on the Mornington Peninsula, and the South Gippsland Conservation Society is planning to "Meet the Candidates" before the Federal Election later in 2007.

Amongst the many meetings, the **PINP Community Advisory Committee** has continued to meet bi-monthly. It is a real loss to this committee that its chairman, who knew Phillip Island so well, Stephen Davie, has resigned from the Board.

The **meetings between PINP C.E.O. and the various environmental groups** have lapsed and, it is my personal opinion that the present Board of Management is totally out of touch with the ethos of conservation on Phillip Island. The coming "Ch..ill Island" event on 27th January is a manifestation of this lack of sympathy.

Planning Issues continue to take up a great deal of time. Penny Manning and I are members of the **Phillip Island and Design Framework Implementation Committee** and despite all the pushing from members of that Committee the whole process of Incorporation into the Planning Scheme is just TOO SLOW. All of this could have been in place three years ago had the Shire Councillors given their support. As it is we are muddling along — largely 'too little, too late' — and, of course, the proposed changes to the Vegetation Protection

Overlay would leave almost no Phillip Island indigenous vegetation with ANY PROTECTION. We have a great deal of work to do on this issue when Planning Panels Victoria hears the Amendment.

Linfox is another big planning proposal, which is taking up much time and effort. Marg Johnson has been co-ordinating our efforts in this area:

September 06 Bass Coast Shire Council voted against the Linfox proposal. Linfox then appealed to VCAT. On 24 November an Administrative Hearing was held with a good crowd of objectors (including PICS, of course). Madam chair described this as "a sizeable contentious case". Linfox is to substitute amended plans to be available by end February. Late in April the hearing will be held. Twenty days before all expert witness material is to be in. There are at least 29 parties to the case at this stage. PICS has received many donations from members and public — many thanks for this. Like the Saltwater Creek case, the Linfox case is inspiring musicians, writers and poets to put pen to paper. Margaret concluded by reading an excellent poem about the Linfox case by David van Dort. *Margaret Johnson*

The other big planning issue for 2007 will be the proposals for the **Port of Hastings**. What is to happen there, of course, in some measure depends on whether the Port Phillip channel is deepened. I refer you to p. 6 of the December 06 *Penguin* and Anitra Carmichael's article in "The Current" newspaper. None of our politicians seems to know that there is now a railway line between Adelaide and Darwin and that there are alternatives to wrecking Port Phillip, or Westernport, or both!

One of the positives of 2006 is that the closure of the **Rhyll Tip** is now signed off — and it will eventually be sealed! When the PICS History is finalized one of the recurrent subjects will be found to have been the Rhyll Tip. So, on we go! We are not going to be bored in 2007!

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LINFOX APPEAL UPDATE

As expected, Linfox have produced amended plans. If you have already been registered as a "party to the VCAT appeal", you would have received these plans in the last couple of weeks. While the new proposal appears

to be a slight improvement on the original, it does not substantially alter the serious planning and landscape issues at stake. Of particular concern is the inclusion of a new Conference Centre to accommodate 300 persons. The Society will be responding by objecting to this inclusion because it does not relate to the previous plan, nor does it relate to circuit use or to this isolated site. We are also saying that there is insufficient information to allow a proper assessment of the landscape impacts of the proposal. We will also point out that the 'coastal walk' is misnamed. What is shown is actually a 'golf course walk' where conflicts between pedestrians and golfers are likely. Of course, we will maintain our previous objection to the original application.

A stringent time limit of March 16 in which to respond was imposed. We hope you managed to respond in time!

We gave an interview to Sarah Hudson of the Phillip Island *Advertiser* which appeared on page 3 of the issue of March 8. We thought local businesses or Cowes-based Conference Centres might be interested!

Unfortunately the Council Press Release (seen on Council's website) on the issue was confusing, to say the least. It omitted to say anything about the new 300 seat Conference Centre being proposed in the amended plans. This was an oversight, we hope. Rather like ignoring the elephant sitting in the lounge room.

Overall, our general opinion on the amended plans was that they represented further development by stealth. Where is the usual process of advertising plans to the public, and allowing consultation, let alone voting by Council?

Thanks for your support and generous donations so far. This will be a large case, and our legal advisers have pointed out the expense of using the best experts we can find. Further donations will mean more ammunition against Linfox, so please spread the word. *Marg Johnson*

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NOTE FROM THE TREASURER

Many thanks to those who have already paid their subscriptions this year. We appreciate your support, both for your memberships and for donations, either to the General Fund or the Public Fund. Subscriptions are due from January 1st of each year. If you have not yet paid this year you will see a red dot on your name label to remind you. Those who have paid will have received a receipt inside this newsletter, unless you have also donated to the Public Fund, in which case you

will have already received both receipts. We are in a fairly healthy state financially, but could be a lot better! Please consider paying your subscription if you have received a red dot. We have lots of good work to do with your contribution!

Christine Grayden, Treasurer.

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PORT OF HASTINGS

PICS Submission to Port of Hastings Strategic Land Use and Transport Access Corridor Planning Consultation Study, written by Gillian Collins, (due mid-March 07) says in part:

We believe the following areas need a comprehensive, arms length, study by qualified scientists:

- The environmental footprint of a proposed Port expansion and measures to be put in place to mitigate its increase.
- The huge load on water resources that an expanded Port would entail.
- Carbon loads generated by expanded Port activity nor plans to offset them.
- Western Port's biodiversity and how it will be affected if the Port expansion takes place.
- Uses of renewable energy within the Port and its possible expansion area.
- Uses of recycled material in all phases of any expansion of the Port.
- Plans to put the protection of the Western Port environment as the number one priority in the possible expansion.

We also believe that the effects of Port expansion and the inherent risks associated with increased shipping traffic need to be studied in light of the importance of the tourism industry to the northern facing beaches of Phillip Island, the penguin colony at The Nobbies, and the possible impact on recreational fishing and fish stocks in the Bay.

Western Port has a tidal system that is unique and unlike Port Phillip in every way. The Shapiro Report gives irrefutable evidence that in the event of an oil spill in Western Port, the entire coastal ecosystem will be destroyed. Adding thousands more ship movements in and out of Hastings will make such an event statistically more probable, if not inevitable. If that

happens, the environment of Western Port will not be the only victim. The tourism industry that relies heavily on Phillip Island and its North-facing beaches would suffer irretrievable harm.

Gillian Collins.

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MINUTES OF GENERAL MEETING

Phillip Island Conservation Society Inc.

Minutes of General Meeting held January 13, 2007

1. Welcome. The President opened the meeting and welcomed everyone.

2. Attendance. As per attendance sheet.

3. Apologies. As per attendance sheet.

4. Minutes of previous General Meeting were accepted.

Moved: G. Johnson Seconded: Bob Baird. Carried.

5. Business arising. "The Sands" development has been withdrawn because the zoning has changed.

6. Correspondence was tabled, and the Secretary invited members to peruse it. Since last General Meeting, two funding submission were written and were successful i.e. \$4,000 (for PICS History production) from Bass Coast Shire Council Community Grant, and another from *Come for a Walk* book sales (for signage at Red Rocks Revegetation Project).

Moved: M. Johnson Seconded: J. Eddy. Carried.

7. Treasurer's report.

General A/C: Opening balance 1/1/06, \$6,516. 88; Closing balance 31/12/06, \$2,752. 25

Public Fund: Opening balance 1/1/06, \$199. 89; Closing balance 31/12/06 \$6,118. 76

8. President's report.

Including Barb Martin Bushbank report, Friends of Koalas report and Linfox planning report. (See elsewhere in newsletter.)

9. General Business.

Motion: "That the permit conditions of the Penguin Resort Stage 2 be examined and correspondence indicating our concern re: adherence to these conditions, be entered into with relevant authorities. Copies of correspondence to go to all Councillors."

Moved: A. Martin Seconded: G. Johnson. Carried.

Motion: "That PICS write to CEO and all Councillors to urge Bass Coast Shire Council to implement the Design Framework as a matter of urgency. This letter to emphasize the enormous effort by the community at numerous consultation meetings where much voluntary time was provided to determine the Draft Strategy."

Moved: G. Johnson Seconded: P. Manning. Carried.

Motion: "That Margaret Hancock is made a Life Member of this Conservation Society."

Moved: C. Grayden Seconded: M. Johnson. Carried with acclamation.

Motion: "That this meeting supports the suggestion, made at the Council forum held January 13, 2007 in Cowes, of a monthly forum to be conducted between community groups and councilors where (a) an update on all issues be provided, and (b) councilors listen to the community's concerns."

Moved: P. Taylor Seconded: J. Ayton. Carried.

10. Meeting closed.

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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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Some images and charts included in the print version of the newsletter are not available in the online version. Print copies of *The Penguin* are available from the Phillip Island library.

PICS CONTACTS

President: Margaret Hancock ph/fax 5952 2557

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