



The Penguin

Newsletter of Phillip Island Conservation Society First
Quarter,
March 2008



Newsletter

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Dates for your Diary

Sat Mar 29 - 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 a member of the Council's Planning Department come and explain it all for us. Meeting will follow speaker.

Sun Mar 30 - Working Bee, Five Ways. 10 a.m. Please bring weeding tools and gloves.

Sat Apr 5 - Children's Environment Morning, "Stick Insects" with John Eddy. Meeting room, Heritage Centre, Cowes. 11 am - 12 noon.

Sat May 3 - Children's Environment Morning, "Experiments". Meeting room, Heritage Centre, Cowes. 11 am - 12 noon.

Sat May 17 - Seasonal Walk, Peter Roberts, Waste Managements Officer, BCSC, will take us on a tour of Rhyll Transfer Station to inspect restoration work. 2pm

Sat/Sun May 24-25 - PICS 40TH BIRTHDAY

CELEBRATIONS, Parish Hall, Cowes. **May 24, 2pm**, launch of PICS History, *An Island Worth Conserving: A History of the Phillip Island Conservation Society*, followed by celebratory afternoon tea. Displays all weekend.

Sat June 7 - Children's Environment Morning, "Worms". Meeting room, Heritage Centre, Cowes. 11 am - 12 noon. (CEM goes into recess over winter and starts again in October.)

Sat Jul 5 - PICS General Meeting, 8 pm Meeting room, Heritage Centre, Cowes. Speaker TBA

Sun Jul 6 - 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, Penguin Parade volunteers centre and plans for rehabilitation centre. 2pm

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

Sun Sep 28 - Working Bee, Planting at Red Rocks. As for Jul 6.

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.

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): Phone Sec Jill Allen: 5956 7109, or email: 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,

It's "EIGHT HOURS DAY", and I'm celebrating it with rather more than "EIGHT HOURS REST"! As I've commuted to Melbourne for four days last week, I've had time to reflect on the wisdom of Australians who in the 1880s fought for and won 'Eight hours work, eight hours rest, eight hours recreation'. I've also had time to reflect on the folly of Australians today who seem to have settled for more than eight hours work, who knows how many hours commuting, and have allowed themselves to be deprived of eight hours rest and eight hours recreation.

The first four days of the Linfox Appeal are behind us. This coming week the Tribunal will sit on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, and next week we'll be back again if needed. How is it going? I've no idea! But special thanks must go to Marg Johnson who has co-ordinated our work with the Environment Defenders Office. (See her report in this newsletter). Special thanks, too, to the individual submitters who have spoken up in defense of the environment they love.

I hope that you will be able to come to the General Meeting on Saturday March 29 and to the working bee the following morning at Five Ways. And have you marked Saturday May 24th in your diary? Kay Setches — a former Minister for Conservation who launched Friends of Koalas for us — is coming to launch *An Island Worth Conserving* at 2 p.m. As well as the book launch there will be a display of PICS activities over the past 40 years. Lots to amuse and amaze! Some fascinating old material and interesting 'before and after' photographs of our activities at Red Rocks. The display will be open again on Sunday from 11 a.m. until 6 p.m., so you will be able to have an unhurried browse.

With best wishes,

Margaret Hancock, President.

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INVITATION TO MEMBERS

To the launch by Kay Setches of

*An Island Worth Conserving: A History of the Phillip Island
Conservation Society*

by Christine Grayden

Followed by afternoon tea celebrating the Society's 40th
birthday

Saturday, May 24, 2008

2pm, Parish Hall, Cowes

RSVP with contact details to

Christine Grayden, ph 5956 8501

Email: cgrayden@waterfront.net.au

PO Box 548, COWES, 3922

by May 9, 2008

If you are unable to attend, you can order a copy of the book.
Just fill in the [online form](#), enclose your payment, and the book
will be posted to you.

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ANNUAL REPORT

PICS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 12.1.08

It is my pleasure and my privilege to share in presenting the 40th
Annual Report of the Phillip Island Conservation Society Inc for the

year ending 12.1.08. Forty years on — well I had looked up that poem written by E E Bowen for the Harrow School in 1972 BEFORE I knew that we were to have a treat of poetry as a prelude to the AGM. So — first of all — thank you to Malcolm Brodie and his crew for their rendition of "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner"! What a great beginning to a meeting, and I hope that we will hear more from them at the fortieth celebrations in May.

As always it has been a busy year for the Committee — meeting together, representing PICS at other meetings, reading reports, making submissions, and in between whiles, doing the outdoor things we all enjoy. So our thanks to all the Committee members for a year's work well done.

PICS HISTORY: About 17 years ago we began muttering "We should produce a PICS history for the 25th Anniversary". Then about twelve years ago we again muttered "We really should produce a PICS History for the 30th Anniversary". Further muttering preceded the 35th Anniversary. BUT THIS TIME the muttering is over, work is underway, and the PICS History will be launched at the celebrations in May. Christine Grayden has worked her way through umpteen minutes, reports and letters, members have given her their recollections of what really did happen, so I'll ask Christine to give us a progress report:

You would have all read in the last newsletter about the chapters I've already done. I've had two productive meetings with the subcommittee where we review each chapter and make alterations where necessary. Greg Johnson has furnished me with 6 pages of information about the Saltwater Creek campaign, and our editor David Bradley is working on that material for us to turn it into a chapter. I am currently catching up with PICS members who have been Shire councillors, and researching those who have died — i.e. Vern Johnson and Murray Hilgendorf. I'm just waiting on a few entries from various members for the Westernport chapter. I will also do portraits of Life Members — i.e. Ken Pound, Keith Grayden, John and Ailsa Swan, Coral Oswin Wood and Margaret Hancock, and will also include a portrait of Jack Oswin who received a BEM for services to conservation. I have been a lot slower than I would have liked with the actual writing of the book for a number of reasons, but I can see light at the end of the tunnel now.

Member Terry Nott is doing some very interesting drawings to help illustrate the book, and Patsy Hunt is doing some wildlife drawings. We are very soon at the stage where we will want to go through photographs. If you have any of PICS activities that we can use we would be grateful for a loan of them so that they can be scanned into my computer and returned to you quickly.

PLANNING ISSUES: The first two lines of the second verse of "Forty years on" sum up our Planning Panels Victoria and Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal adventures:

Routs and discomfiture, rushes and rallies,

Bases attempted and rescued and won

Amendment C46 was a notable achievement, with Planning Panels Victoria upholding our fight to maintain the long-standing Vegetation Controls on Phillip Island AND the Phillip Island and San Remo Design Framework took its first big step into incorporation into the Bass Coast Planning Scheme.

The VCAT decision on the proposed Tourism Development at the Rhyll Caravan Park ended with a recommendation that the developer should get a clean sheet of paper and start again! LINFOX is our next VCAT appointment — and an appointment that requires a great deal of work and fundraising. I'll ask Marg Johnson to give us a brief resume. (See article later this edition)

The Structure Plans for San Remo, Newhaven and Cape Woolamai have been through the consultation process and are awaiting Council decision. The Structure Plans for Rhyll, Silverleaves, Cowes and Ventnor go on public exhibition on January 23rd. This is the time for us as a Society and as individuals to make our comments. One of the most important aspects of the Structure Plans is the setting of town boundaries so that the rural land is maintained. This is the converse of what happens in some other countries where the rural land is given PRIORITY CONSIDERATION and its boundaries are set first.

Ever since PICS was established a recurrent theme has been THE TIP — what was a slope from the Rhyll Road to the Rhyll Inlet has turned into a mountain of garbage. The mountain can't be moved, but it can be reclaimed. The Tip site is now under the management of the Phillip Island Nature Park, and the Shire has begun the work of weeding, recapping and revegetation prior to moving out of that site. In the meantime the TRANSFER STATION has to be established elsewhere. As a first step it is proposed to rezone rural land in Gap Road to a 'special use' zone for a Transfer Station. Various sites have been considered, and the Gap Road one appears to be the best.

Of course our planning concerns are not confined to Phillip Island — what happens elsewhere has all sorts of other 'spin-off' effects. Some of you will have heard Gillian Collins speak about proposals for the Port of Hastings at our last General Meeting. We are fortunate to have Gillian involved with this issue, as she manages to attend numerous meetings and keeps in contact with conservation groups around Western Port.

DESALINATION: On Thursday evening I was at Kilcunda at yet another well attended "Your Water, Your Say" meeting. What a great lot they are! Including many of our colleagues from the South Gippsland Conservation Society, and lots of other people, including energetic YOUNG ONES. We've much to learn about Desalination — but from what we know so far it seems that in the Victorian context it just doesn't add up — environmentally or economically. And the idea of preparing an Environmental Effects Statement AFTER the event defies all logic. One of the important issues is the possible adverse effects of the intake and outlet pipes on marine life: what's a penguin worth? Dr Andre Chiaradia from PINP will be working in Spain early in this year and is extending his stay to do some research of the effects of desalination plants

on marine life in the Mediterranean. I have invited Andre to later speak to us about his findings at a General Meeting.

FIVE WAYS & RED ROCKS: We have continued with our two "hands-on projects" at Five Ways and Red Rocks. Fiveways is now a matter of cutting back, some plant replacement, and perpetual weed eradication and rubbish collection. We are hoping to receive a further grant to continue the Coast Action work at Red Rocks. This project is going really well, and is a source of great "job satisfaction". There's another Working Bee there tomorrow at 10 — rubbish collection and removal of tree guards. This is an excellent chance to see what is to be done next and what needs repair.

SEASONAL WALKS, NEWSLETTER AND CHILDREN'S GROUP: Special thanks to John Eddy and Christine Grayden for producing *The Penguin* each quarter and for organising the Seasonal Walks. If you've not been able to come for the walks you've at least been able to read about them. An interesting program is planned for this year.

Christine has also been busy organising the Children's Environment Mornings:

Children's Environment Mornings continue to attract around 8-14 children each time. I was the 'expert' this morning on Orcas, which proceeded even though we had a technical hitch with the projector, and the children enjoyed playing on the life-size Orca mat and making their Orca puppets with fish and seal puppets added in. They then put on a puppet show with lots of Orcas eating fish and seals using the projected blank image on the screen. Their inventiveness never ceases to amaze me! As per articles in *The Penguin* this season we have had sessions on Hiking the Kakoda Trail, Flowering Plants and Koalas, and will also have Lizards, Bandicoots with Gillian Collins, experiments and two more I have yet to arrange. I have lost my helper in Skye Winder, who has headed off around Australia for 12 months. If anyone would like to help in her place I'd appreciate it greatly. We run from October to June on the first or second Saturday of the month, mostly here in the Meeting room, from 11 a.m. to about 12.30 p.m.

PHILLIP ISLAND NATURE PARK: To me, one of the great conservation concerns is the seeming direction of the PINP. You probably have noticed — and may be affronted as I am — by the advertisements for activities on "CHILL ISLAND". This may have been acceptable as a one-off marketing tool, but it is offensive to see the debasing of the principles which were behind the purchase of Churchill Island, and the years of work which have gone into developing it as a place of great beauty and tranquility.

It is also of concern that a LARGE SUSTAINABILITY CENTRE is planned at the Koala Conservation Centre. There may well be a need for a Sustainability Centre, but I question that the KCC or even Phillip Island is the right place for it. Visitors go to the KCC for an OUTDOOR ENVIRONMENTAL EXPERIENCE. Like Churchill Island becoming "Chill Island", the principles on which the KCC was founded are being debased. Perhaps this reflects the

lack of long term "Corporate Memory" amongst the Board members and many of the senior staff.

This seems a good time for Patsy to tell us about Friends of the Koalas

Another year draws to a close (our 17th). Thank you to the Nature Park staff we have had the pleasure of volunteering with this year. We do need more people to help us as the problems facing koalas are not decreasing and there is much to do to ensure their survival as a wild population on Phillip Island and further afield. Why not come along to one of our Koala counts (2nd Tues of month) or habitat days (1st Sat of month), or attend our AGM on January 18th at 8pm.

This year has been a busy one for **submissions and letters**. We have commented on many Council planning matters as well as **VicRoads** planned **code for vegetation removal** on roadsides and the **proposed desalination plant**.

Another matter that is causing concern is the proposed sustainability centre at the Koala Conservation Centre. Plans produced by the Nature Park show the building will be very large. A recent on site meeting showing the buildings huge footprint did little to dispel concerns. Anyone who wishes to see the plans should contact FOK. Friends of the Koalas realises there is a need for an improved visitor centre, built for sustainability, with more space for staff and education facilities, but the current plans are too elaborate and expensive, and threaten the integrity of this important facility. The Koala Conservation Centre was created for the preservation of the koala and land was purchased for that reason. It was also to provide visitors with an easy means to view koalas in such a way as to be as close to seeing them in the wild as possible. The centre has fulfilled its charter well — people come to see koalas in a wonderful bushland setting while, behind the scenes, valuable research is conducted. Hopefully common sense will prevail and a more suitable design will be presented.

Now is a great time to visit the KCC with the joeys becoming more independent. Outside the centre we are still getting sightings of koalas around the Island. Let FOK or the Nature Park know if you see one in your area. If anyone wants to read more about our activities, copies of our newsletter are available. Take care over the busy season and watch out for wildlife on the roads.

Let's also hear from Anne Davie about the Barb Martin Bush Bank:

It will be 10 years on Sep 1st 2008 since the Bushbank opened its shed door for sales. It was the commitment of the Island's environmental groups, including the emerging Coast Action, that brought about the creation of the facility. The generosity of supporters, including the donation of the land by the Phillip Island Nature Park, ensured the Barb Martin dream could become a reality. Last year at a luncheon at the Bushbank, Friend of Koalas and PICS presented a framed photograph/article of Barb to be hung in the shed so we can feel her presence even more when we are on the site.

The Bushbank has been a remarkable success story with the number of plants propagated increasing every year. As we look around the Island one is very much aware that this has resulted in landscape change in urban and rural areas. The facility has also been a highly successful community/social model with volunteer hours high and new friendships numerous. The Bushbank won a Commonwealth government award last year, recognising the positive contribution by volunteers over a number of years.

During the 19 years of operation, the Bushbank has been fortunate in having wonderful young people as its Co-ordinators, people with an incredible knowledge and a dedication to a sustainable environment. Stephen Curwood with the help of his partner Kirsty was the first appointment followed by Bec Jack. Their contribution was considerable and last year Jenny Toy, who was an outstanding, experienced applicant, was appointed following Bec's departure. Jenny is so dedicated she leaves a vehicle in Cowes and travels by ferry from the Peninsula where she lives!

The PINP continues to give great support and Endeavour Petroleum is an ongoing sponsor assisting financially with firstly the purchase of igloos, watering system and other improvements to the operation. The committee was delighted to learn recently that it has been successful in receiving a grant from the proceeds of the Island Walks book. The drought conditions have affected the Bushbank sales in the last 12 months but with a wetter than expected Spring, sales did pick up. The Bushbank has set a target of 60,000 plants to be propagated by July 2008 and with the dedication of the Bushbank team I am in no doubt that this will be achieved.

The Nobbies building has re-opened. I think it is fair to say that "the best has been made of a bad job". And to think that the Victorian Government could have saved several million dollars by demolishing the building and building an interpretation centre/toilets and kiosk! What a wasted opportunity, and that money could have gone towards the Summerlands buy-back, which still continues far too slowly!

So — here we are. Let's not pay too much heed to the first half of the final verse:

"Forty years on, growing older and older

Shorter in wind as in memory long

Feeble of foot and rheumatic of shoulder

"What will it help you that once you were strong?"

Let's concentrate on the next four lines:

"God gives us bases to guard and beleaguer

Games to ply out, whether earnest or fun

Fights for the fearless and goals for the eager,

Twenty and thirty and forty years on."

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REPORT ON LINFOX VCAT

By Marg Johnson, 10.3.08

The Linfox appeal at VCAT began this week and will run for approximately 12 days. It is being heard before Deputy President Helen Gibson and Senior Member Margaret Baird, who have already spent a day inspecting the site and views of it from all angles. They intend to visit the site again after the case, and were interested in a calendar of big events at the track.

After a summary of the proposal, the Bass Coast Shire Council began their case against the proposal. Their submission was presented by Mr. Cicero from the legal firm of Best Hooper, and expert evidence was given for them by Mr. Lane on ecology and Mr. Nelthorpe on planning policies. Vigorous questioning of this evidence came from Linfox's barristers Chris Townshend and Mr. Canavan QC.

A sizeable group of objectors and supporters (between 10 to 20 people) has attended each day of the hearing so far, from 10 am to 4.30/5 pm, concentrating on every word and watching the pile of reports grow higher. The Phillip Island Conservation Society's legal team of Annette Jones, solicitor with the Environment Defenders Office, instructs our two barristers Jim McKenna and Emily Porter. Further expert evidence will be provided for the Society by Bernadette George (Social Planning) and Bryn Davies (Landscaping).

On the third day, the individual objectors began presenting their submissions. A great deal of research had gone into all these presentations, and issues raised in them included:

- contravention of local, State and Federal planning strategies and policies
- the value of the site for valuable farming practices
- traffic congestion
- noise pollution
- the problem of successfully growing plants on site to screen buildings
- loss of rugged unspoilt landscape and views
- lack of sustainable building design
- loss of and potential damage to habitat
- alteration of heritage-listed landscape
- loss of public and private amenity.

Individual objectors were Tony and Deb Holland, Reg Elder and Cathie Roby, Jan Fleming, National Trust of Australia (Vic) (Helen Bull), Anne Davie, Smith's Beachcomber Association (Ian Shand), Pauline Taylor, Terry Nott, Ross Lloyd, Jennifer Grimwade (written submission), Phillip Island Nature Park (Dr. Roz Jessup), Greg Johnson, Rosalie and John Counsell

Following this, the Society's legal team presented the case on their behalf. The expert witnesses' evidence can be summarized as:

Bryn Davies (Landscape)

- the proposal would introduce settlement into a rural and scenic coastal environment
- the proposed "screening" of buildings is not consistent with the natural openness of the indigenous vegetation
- the proposal contradicts Coastal Spaces State government objective of containing settlements along the coast
- it changes the character of the coastline beside the "iconic" Pyramid Rock
- it will lead to erosion of the wild and undeveloped character of the coastline.

Bernadette George (Social Planner) said:

- there is no need for additional accommodation beyond the hotel, conference and lodge facility which already has a permit
- the development is likely to generate negative social and economic effects in that the planned village may eventually be sold as individual units and so become a residential subdivision; it will impose extra burden on inadequate community infrastructure; and it would be a physically segregated settlement which does not promote social cohesion between locals and tourists (similar to gated settlements).

It has been a long process arriving at this final hearing, and Society members and supporters have persevered with their concerns through many preliminary hearings, delays and cancellations since 2005. Thanks to all who have helped us in any way, be it donations, transport, reading reports, cooking meals for weary VCAT attendees, attending meetings etc. The Society has so far raised over \$12,000 for this battle, of which \$4,000 came from the "Advertiser's Fighting Fund". We have been moved by the concern and generosity of the community about this issue.

The Island is a special, unique place and so are the people who are trying to keep it that way.

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Pyramid Rock, 16.2.08

In warm, sunny weather with a strong southerly breeze, eleven of us gathered at the carpark at the end of Pyramid Rock Rd. From maps of the proposed Linfox development we could envisage how intrusive the hotel, golf course and resort buildings would be for future visitors to this exposed headland. We mused on how unlikely plantings of vegetation, constantly wind-pruned by the southerlies and south-westerlies off Bass Strait, would be in screening the intrusion.

Beginning our walk towards Pyramid Rock, we noted the recovery of areas of sheet erosion, not far below the carpark. Some years ago, brush covering was wired in place allowing hardy ground-covers like Noonflower and Tussocky Poa to gain a foothold. Delineation of the car park, access track, stretches of boardwalk and the two viewing platforms have helped reduce the extensive trampling and uncontrolled car traffic that used to predispose these clay soils to erosion.

The views back along the coast towards Cape Woolamai, and, in the other direction, towards the Nobbies are truly spectacular on a clear day. The black basalt cliffs along this rugged coastline contrast with the vivid greens and soft greys of cliff-top vegetation, the reds of tuff outcrops and the mirrored flashes of sun and rolling lines of white foam from the sea. We saw a group of rock fisherman way below us and, out to sea, a lone gannet patrolling. Several surfers floated in Storm Bay, just west of Pyramid Rock, but conditions belied the bay's name, and they waited long periods between waves in the lazy swell.

Pyramid Rock itself is a basalt stack, sitting on a base of light coloured granite of the same type and age as the Cape Woolamai granite. While shaped like one, it is not a volcano, geologists assure us. This day the tide was very low, and we speculated that you could almost wade out to Pyramid Rock and retrieve that annoying bit of blue plastic washed up on it. Two of our party remembered in the mid-1970s and 1980s watching huge flocks of starlings returning at dusk to roost on Pyramid Rock.

Returning to the carpark, our walk entered its second stage as we took the westward track, through low, wind-pruned paperbarks, boobialla, coast tea tree and white correa, interspersed with areas of grassland. We noted the large numbers of Pittosporum here reduced to shrubs, but potentially invasive weeds nevertheless. Perhaps a future working bee in conjunction with PINP could address this.

Wallabies are frequently seen in this part of the coastal reserve. A path down to the rocky beach gives access for fishermen and surfers, but is unsurfaced and much worn down. The main track, however, is well-formed and climbs to a raised boardwalk and stairs to a vantage point with great views to the shore below. The walking track can be followed all the way to Berry's Beach and that scenic and leisurely walk is described, in reverse (i.e. Berry's Beach to Pyramid Rock) as Walk 17 in *Come for Walk! Exploring Phillip Island*.

We chose to go only as far as the large steep-sided gully known as the "Amphitheatre". Unfortunately this interesting feature was the site for the Phillip Island rubbish tip some 50-60 years ago, and, while much of the rubbish has since been removed, remnants are still visible, including an ancient boiler. Recent Landcare plantings, aimed at rehabilitating the landscape, need to be supplemented. Some seating in this area allows for comfortable rest. We retraced our steps to the carpark, and to the end of our pleasant walk and talk together.

John Eddy

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Red Rocks Coast Action

Our January working bee saw new members Sue and Bruno join Christine and John in a cleaning up campaign. We collected two bags of rubbish and two bags of recycling. Interestingly, much of the recycling was old cans and bottles that have become visible since the weed cover has been removed. While we seem to have been successful with our Envirofund application for \$15,725 for completion of the staircase at the western end of the car parks area, and for protective brush matting, fencing and planting, we have yet to be informed or see the money. Our next working bee will be on Sunday July 6, which will be a planting day along the fire track foreshore. All tools and gloves provided. Meet at Red Rocks car park at 10 a.m. Enquiries phone me on 5956 8501.

Christine Grayden

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PICS HISTORY REPORT

With the help of: my Editor, David Bradley; my sub-committee Margaret Hancock, Anne Davie and Penny Manning; specific information supplied by PICS members, Phillip Island and Bass Coast Council staff and PINP staff filling in the gaps; Graeme Burgan scanning all the illustrative material; two proofreaders; Chris Larsen drawing the maps; PICS members hunting down printer quotes; and historian John Hirst answering a hundred questions from me — phew! — we're getting there rapidly now. The book — titled *An Island Worth Conserving: A History of the Phillip Island Conservation Society* — is A4, 120 pages long and illustrated with 25 drawings, 22 b&w photographs and 2 maps. It contains 18 chapters, 2 appendices and a 9-page bibliography. We are all looking forward to the launch and 40th birthday celebrations on

the 24th May, and hope to see as many members there as possible. Don't forget to RSVP to me by May 9th (with your contact details) if you are coming!

Christine Grayden

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TAX DEDUCTIBLE DONATION

We are coming up to 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 80 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 current 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.

PICS Financial Statement

The Financial Statement for the year ended 31/12/07 is provided in the print version of the newsletter, available at the Cowes Library.

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JANUARY GENERAL MEETING

Minutes of General Meeting held January 12, 2008

- Welcome.** The President, M. Hancock, opened the meeting at 8.09 pm, welcomed everyone, and thanked Malcolm Brodie and crew for their performance of Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, a fundraiser for PICS.
- Attendance.** As per attendance book.
- Apologies.** As per attendance book.

4. Subscriptions.A reminder to members to renew.

5.Minutes of the previous General Meeting, 29 September 2007, as circulated, accepted.

Moved: C. Grayden **Seconded:** J. Fleming **Carried.**

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

7.Correspondence to be tabled / spoken to.

Moved:M. Johnson **Seconded:** P. Taylor **Carried.**

8.Treasurer's Annual Report. To be received at AGM.

C. Grayden was thanked for her role as Treasurer.

There was a query relating to the Public Fund / Fighting Fund

A slight decline in membership was noted.

There was a query regarding VCAT donations.

It was noted that one quarter of the newsletters were emailed.

9.PICS Annual Report. To be received at AGM.

10.Any Other Business?

M. Johnson noted a perceptible 'change in the air' with regard to the Linfox matter.

G. Collins reported that the Southern Victoria Community Action Group <http://www.svcag.org/> was receiving assistance from the Environment Defenders Office <http://www.edo.org.au/edovic/>

G. Collins reported that the Environmental Effects Statement relating to the Frankston bypass, connecting Hastings to Melbourne, was meaningless.

C. Grayden reported on the success of the Children's Environment Mornings, with Orca, the life-sized whale being the star attraction.

P. Hunt, President of Friends of the Koalas <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~koalas/> reminded members of the koala counts at the Koala Conservation Centre <http://www.penguins.org.au/content.asp?pg=57> on the second Tuesday of the month. FOK AGM to be held Friday 18th January 2008 at 8 pm.

Some concern was expressed regarding VicRoads <http://www.vicroads.vic.gov.au/Home> attitude to roadside vegetation.

The power source for the proposed desalination plant was still unclear.

T. Nott suggested that it would make more sense for the proposed desalination plant to use a degraded site. See also <http://www.yourwateryoursay.org/>

There was some discussion regarding appointments to the Board of the Nature Park <http://www.penguins.org.au/content.asp?pg=98> and the role of the various Community Advisory Committees.

P. Manning reported that the Environmental Advisory Committee is taken seriously.

P. Taylor reported that a request to the Community Advisory Committee for a community information meeting regarding the proposed Sustainability Centre was denied.

See also http://www.penguins.org.au/files/Strategic-Plan-2006_11.pdf

Members were referred to the publication 'Forty years on : an anthology of school songs' compiled by Gavin Ewart.

A. Davie reported on the Bushbank's planned 10th anniversary celebrations on the 1st September 2008.

G. Collins reported on the Mornington Peninsula & Western Port Biosphere Reserve <http://www.biosphere.org.au/> and Rob Gell.

There was a suggestion regarding a thank you to be held in the Heritage Centre Meeting Room on the 8th February 2008 by Diane Baird and the compilers of the publication *Come for a walk: Exploring Phillip Island*.

M. Johnson reminded members of the Ventnor Structure Plan currently on display. <http://www.basscoast.vic.gov.au/content/content.asp?cid=368&ctid=1&cnid=2970>

A. Davie reminded members of a meeting of the Grossard Point Precinct Group on the 23rd January 2008.

11. Next General Meeting 29th March 2008, 8.00pm, Cowes Cultural Centre.

12. Working Bee Sunday 13th January 2008, 10 am, at Red Rocks. Rubbish and tree guard removal. J. Eddy reminded members to bring gloves and bags.

13. The meeting closed at 9.21pm.

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Southern Victoria Community Action Group Inc.

The newsletter for the SVCAG is available on their website www.svcag.org . For more information, tel 03 59988182 email: info@svcag.org

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