



The Penguin

Newsletter of Phillip Island Conservation Society - Third Quarter, September 2003

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Newsletter

Dates for your Diary

Saturday 27 September: 35th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION! The Heritage Centre, Cowes. 6.00 pm. Bring & Share meal (no food heating facilities). The dinner will be followed by the **General Meeting** at 8 pm. Guest Speaker: Dennis Cox from Coast Action will speak on 'Guardians of the Coast'.

Sunday 28 September: Working Bee, 10 a.m. at Fiveways. Lots of weeding to do; BYO tools, refreshments, energy. After the working bee we will visit the boardwalk in the new close viewing area at the Koala Conservation Centre.

Saturday 15th November: Seasonal Walk, McHaffies Lagoon. Meet at the junction of Ventnor Rd & McHaffies Lane. Bring binoculars, insect repellent, wear strong shoes.

Saturday 17th January: PICS AGM, 8 p.m., Heritage Centre, Cowes.

Committee Meetings: The first Friday of each month at 8 pm, in either the Cultural Centre or the Heritage Centre, Cowes.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Members,

The best news from Phillip Island is that there has been RAIN! Not enough, but nonetheless, good soaking rain, wild winds, cold days, and almost an 'old-fashioned' winter. At the end of August we re-visited *Burke's Backyard*, lots of trees were planted, and various 'follow up' jobs were done. On the Saturday morning I was working at a sand 'blow out' at Ventnor Beach. It was fascinating to see the success of last year's plantings: the milk cartons were half submerged in sand, the brush and wire had stayed firmly in position, and the top of the dune was STABLE. We used the same method to work down towards the high tide mark and, by this time next year, we'll know if the system really works.

I have asked Christine to include the whole of a Press Release from the Ministers of Planning & Environment in this issue. Rumors abound about the Phillip Island Nature Park and the future of the Seal Rocks Victoria Australia building at Point Grant, and really all we can do is wait for official notification of what is to happen.

I am hoping that the new CEO of the Nature Park, Mr. MARK MANTEIT, will be able to accept an invitation to meet with the PICS Committee, and our colleagues from WESBOC and Friends of Koalas early in November.

It is of real concern to us that the PINP Board, to be appointed in August 2004, may well be made up of people with few conservation qualifications and no local knowledge. The Nature Park has grown out of years of local conservation concern and local effort to keep public land in the public domain; it is not just a business with a fence around its edges and the *Bottom Line* being all that matters.

'The Battle of Salt Water Creek' is happening again — this time at Maher's Landing. Please give your support to the South Gippsland Conservation Society in its fight for Anderson Inlet.

On your next visit to the Barb Martin Bush Bank, take time to admire the new glass fronted bookshelves. It was a great joy for me to take some of Barb's books to form

the nucleus of the Bush Bank Library.

Currently there are two local arguments being waged — the introduction of fees at Foreshore Car Parks and the removal of Environmental Weeds (e.g. pine trees) on the foreshore at the request (and expense) of an adjacent landowner. The PICS Committee has adopted policies on these issues that you will find in this newsletter.

We are having a modest celebration on Saturday September 27th to celebrate PICS 35th Birthday. Please bring food to share (N.B. There are no food heating facilities at the Heritage Centre) and come ready for a pleasant time of reminiscing and conviviality. Later in the evening will be a General Meeting and an interesting Guest Speaker, Dennis Cox from Coast Action.

I hope to see you there.

Yours sincerely,

Margaret Hancock, President

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<p>CONGRATULATIONS TO PETER DANN AND MORAG MACKAY ON THE BIRTH OF THEIR BABY BOY!</p>
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PRESS RELEASE —NEW PHILLIP ISLAND NATURE PARK BOARD AND CEO ANNOUNCED

Press Release from Ministers Thwaites and Delahunty, 21 July 2003

The Minister for Environment, John Thwaites and the Minister for Planning, Mary Delahunty, today announced that five new members have been appointed to the Phillip Island Nature Board, (*sic*) effective immediately.

"The new board has an excellent mix of skills and experience with representatives from science/research, business, accounting, architecture/planning, education and the broader community, including three Phillip Island locals," said Acting Minister for Environment, John

Brumby.

"A host of factors have combined to create a difficult climate for tourism operators and we believe that the new board and the incoming CEO have the right mix of experience to face the challenges ahead. The Government is fully committed to supporting Phillip Island and its surrounding region to fully realize its future tourism potential," he said.

Newly appointed CEO Mr. Mark Manteit, who is due to commence work on the island in 4-6 weeks said he plans to manage change at the Phillip Island Nature Park while maintaining wildlife and heritage conservation as primary objectives.

"The change will need to encompass an overhaul of the business and marketing strategies, new and improved visitor services and entertainments, renewed professionalism in management and staff, upgrading of aging Park infrastructure and participation in leadership of Bass Coast and statewide tourism," said Mr. Manteit.

For the past three years Mr. Manteit has been CEO of Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary in Queensland. During that time he put an end to the business's financial problems and oversaw its return to profitability.

In line with the previous management approach, one of the Board's first tasks will be to appoint a series of advisory committees, which may include members of the local community, to provide input to the Board on issues such as science and research, community, environment plus education and interpretation.

Board appointments are as follows:

- Ongoing: Dr Ras (Robin) Lawson
- Reappointed: Dr Kathryn Handasyde
- Reappointed: Ms Ann Penauluna
- New: Mr John Laurie  Chairperson
- New: Ms Stella Axarlis
- New: Dr David Beatty
- New: Mr Stephen Davie

New: Ms Ann Keddie

The future of the former Seal Rocks Sea Life Centre building is still under consideration by Government following a recommendation by the Phillip Island Nature Park Business Taskforce.

Qs AND As to support announcement of new board members and CEO for Phillip Island Nature Park:

What is the Phillip Island Nature Park?

The Victorian Government established Phillip Island Nature Park in 1996. It is managed to protect the flora and fauna of Phillip Island, its natural and cultural features and to provide diverse experiences for over one million visitors each year. The Nature Park includes popular tourist attractions like the Penguin Parade, Koala Conservation Centre, Rhyll Inlet, Seal Rocks and Churchill Island. It also manages many recreational areas like Cape Woolamai, Pyramid Rock, as well as all of the surf beaches on Phillip Island.

What function does the Phillip Island Nature Park board provide?

The new Board will be responsible for the establishment of policies and strategic directions for the Park in accordance with the management philosophy and strategic objectives as set out in the Phillip Island Nature Park Management Plan 2000. This document details future directions for the park and the priorities for the management of this internationally renowned tourist attraction.

The Park is managed to give priority to the conservation of natural and cultural values and protection of wildlife consistent with the Park's leadership role in eco-tourism and education. Recognising both the local community and public interest in Phillip Island, the management plan conveys how Park staff will work with interest groups and individuals to best manage one of Victoria's most valuable assets.

Why have new board members been appointed for the Phillip Island Nature Park?

The terms of seven of the eight members of the Board

expired on 16 July 2003. All these members had served at least two terms (six years) and one member had been on the Board or its predecessor for more than 20 years.

Why have some board members remained?

Two existing members were reappointed and now join the one current member (Dr Lawson) whose term of appointment is not due to expire until 4 August 2004. The new Board has a mix of skills and experience appropriate to the challenges ahead of it in the coming year.

How long will the new board members serve on the board?

The new members will serve for just over one year until 4 August 2004. During the next 12 months a process to allow for longer-term skill based (rather than nomination based) appointments will be developed.

*Who was responsible for the new board appointments?
How were board members chosen?*

The Phillip Island Nature Park Business Taskforce (appointed by Minister Garbutt on 9 August 2002) made an initial recommendation about new appointments to the Minister for Environment as part of its original Terms of Reference. Sustainable Development and Environment Committee of Cabinet then endorsed that recommendation. The Minister for Environment and the Minister for Planning both had subsequent input before Cabinet approved the final list of eight members.

What influence will the new board have on the future of Seal Rocks?

The future of the former Seal Rocks Sea Life Centre will be determined by Government based on an initial recommendation from the Phillip Island Nature Park Business Taskforce (another of its original Terms of Reference).

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PICS POLICIES

Beach Parking/Removal of Environmental Weeds

1. PARKING FEES

This Society agrees with the imposition and collection of parking fees with the following provisions:

- (a) on the payment of an annual fee ratepayers and residents will be issued with a recognizable parking permit,
- (b) occasional fees for visitors,
- (c) that all monies collected be 'tagged' for the development and maintenance of foreshore facilities, i.e. car-parks, toilets, rubbish collection

2. REMOVAL OF environmental weeds on crown land at adjacent landholder's expense

This Society agrees with this practice. (Refer to Margaret Hancock's statement in *The Advertiser*, Wednesday August 27, 2003, page 3 in reference to the Grollo Family application). This practice is supported under the following condition: monies should be sufficient to cover the cost of removal, and the cost of rehabilitating and re-vegetating the site.

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BARB MARTIN BUSHBANK

There has been substantial plantings over the last few weeks on the island and the Green Corps has once again done fantastic work. The ground is quite wet so Spring time will see even more plants leaving the Bushbank and being put in the ground. Beck Jack has moved easily into the position of Coordinator and has impressed the committee and volunteers with her knowledge and commitment. Last month Beck attended a workshop as part of her ongoing training. She has some different ideas for the volunteers and we are enjoying learning from her.

The new bookshelves look very handsome on the wall at the Bushbank. These were made by Cameron Wyatt and will house some of Barb's wonderful collection of books about plants, etc. The money for the shelves was donated by the Conservation Society and the Friends of the Koalas as a tribute to Barb's environmental work on Phillip Island.

Lots of work to be done at the Bushbank so would you be able to give a couple of hours each week as the busy planting season will soon be upon us? Beck would love to hear from you.

Anne Davie

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COWES RESIDENTIAL AREA TO EXPAND

As recommended in the Phillip Island and San Remo Design Framework, the RESIDENTIAL AREA of Cowes is to be expanded to the north side of the Ventnor Road (Nobbies Rd). PICS has made submissions to Amendments C25 and C26, Committee members have met with the proponents and we will know, when the next stage, Mediation, is reached if all our concerns have been met. C25 is the Rural Land on the north side of Justice Road between the Ventnor and Settlement Road.

C26 is the Rural Land bounded by McKenzie, Settlement, and the Ventnor Roads and Anderson Street. Our particular concern here was the remnant vegetation near the Ventnor Road. We are hoping that this can be protected by re-alignment of proposed boundaries, fencing building envelopes and Trust for Nature Covenants.

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THE ISLE OF WIGHT, &c.

Yes, here it is again, the latest plans for a new 'Isle of Wight' will soon be on display. Please take time to look at the plans, which will be at the Customer Service Centre in Cowes, and make your comment. ALSO please send a copy of your comments to the PICS Committee, PO BOX 548, Cowes.

'Hollydene' has sunk without a trace! As you go along Thompson Avenue you will see the notices announcing that the site is for sale.

The R.S.L. is planning to go higher and wider. The Ground floor is to have a Sports Bar with 60 seats, a Members Lounge with 60 seats, and Gaming Lounge with 57

machines, and, on the first floor, a Bistro with 200 seats and a Function Room with 300 seats.

SEASONAL WALK AT KILCUNDA

Heather Mabilia at Kilcunda led our Winter Seasonal Walk  on a mild, sunny, windless day. Heather is a member of the Kilcunda Foreshore Committee, and, seemingly a splendid writer of funding submissions! Her small Committee has responsibility for the Kilcunda Caravan Park and all of the land south of the Highway from Mabilia Road through to the Mouth of the Powlett.

We were shown revegetation works, new staircases to help counter foreshore erosion, walked across the trestle bridge and along the Rail Trail, then drove to the Mouth of the Powlett, to inspect a newly created car park and path through to the beach.

How lucky the people of Kilcunda and the visiting walkers and surfers are to have such an extraordinarily skilled and hard working volunteer committee who must do hours and hours of hard work to maintain a very large area of Public Land.

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RAMSAR STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT PLAN RELEASED

The Victorian Department of Sustainability and Environment has just released five Strategic Management Plans for Victoria's five Ramsar sites. 'The strategic Management Plan for the Western Port Ramsar site is an integral component of a program to develop a comprehensive management framework for Victoria's Wetlands of International Importance (or "Ramsar sites") listed under the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971). The primary goal of the management framework is to maintain the ecological character of Victoria's Ramsar sites through conservation and wise use.' (S.M.P. p.1)

(Copies of the Management Plan are available from DSE Customer Service Centre, Ph 13 6186, or from the DSE website at www.dse.vic.gov.au and cover the site description, policy framework, values, management of risks, site management strategies and nine appendices concerning

threatened and pest species.)

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COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT URGED TO RETHINK ITS DECISION ON POINT NEPEAN

The Victorian National Parks Association, the National Trust of Australia (Victoria) and the Australian Conservation Foundation have expressed serious concern at the Commonwealth Government's decision to 'carve up' the natural and cultural heritage of Point Nepean. Even though they have decided to stop the sale of Point Nepean, they are prepared to enter into long-term commercial leases of significant natural and cultural heritage which may yet be a very bad result for this national treasure. The best interests of the area would be served by its inclusion into one proposed Point Nepean National Park, rather than by the present arrangement that would see Victorians and their government and agencies denied input into what a developer can or can't do with Point Nepean. The battle is far from over, and the Victorian National Parks Association will keep us informed.

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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 2003 is:

President	Margaret Hancock (Ph/Fax 5952-2557)
Senior Vice President	Rose Thomas
Secretary	Margaret Johnson
Minutes Secretary	Bruce Howe
Treasurer	Gillian Collins (Ph 5956 8840)
	Anne Davie, Penny Manning, Greg

Other Members	Johnson, John Jansson, Julie Box, Pauline Taylor
Other PICS Responsibilities:	
Newsletter	Christine Grayden/John Eddy (Ph 5956 8501; Fax 5956 8314; cgrayden@waterfront.net.au)
Meeting notices and publicity	Rose Thomas
Ventnor Public Land Committee	Gillian Collins
Red Rocks Coast Action Project	Gillian Collins
South Coast Walking Track	Penny Manning
Bike Paths	Penny Manning
Friends of Churchill Island Liaison	Julie Box
Barb Martin Bushbank Liaison	Anne Davie
Landcare Liaison	Morag Mackay
Landcare Salinity Committee	John Jansson
Website Manager	Diane Baird (dianebaird@yahoo.com)
Grant Investigation	Tim Patkin

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And also

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

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