



# The Penguin

Newsletter of Phillip Island Conservation Society - Third Quarter,  
September 2005



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## Dates for your Diary

**Saturday 24th September**, 8.00pm, PICS General Meeting, Heritage Centre, Cowes. Speaker will be Thierry Roland from Parks Victoria, talking about Westernport's Marine Parks, especially the biology of the Churchill Island Marine Park; with beautiful video. Meeting to follow.

**Sunday, 25th September**, 10 am, Working Bee, Red Rocks - weeding, planting, rubbish collection. Meet at car park.

**Sat 8 October**, 11 a.m.-12 noon: Children's Environment Morning Meeting Room, Heritage Centre, Cowes. Adult to stay with their child. Enquiries: Christine Grayden, ph 5956 8501.

**Sat 5 November**, 11 a.m. - 12 noon: Children's Environment Morning Meeting Room, Heritage Centre, Cowes. Adult to stay with their child. Enquiries: Christine Grayden ph 5956 8501.

**Saturday, 12th November**, WESBOC 30<sup>th</sup> celebrations. All welcome! See article inside.

**Saturday, 19th November**, 2.00pm, Seasonal Walk: low energy home. Visit to Bett Robertson's energy self-sufficient home, Rhyll Road, just east of Coghlan Rd roundabout. (Look for balloons on gate).

**Sat 3 December**, 11 a.m. - 12 noon: Children's Environment Morning Meeting Room, Heritage Centre, Cowes. Adult to stay with their child. Enquiries: Christine Grayden ph 5956 8501.

**Saturday, 21st January**, 8.00pm, PICS AGM, Heritage Centre, Cowes.

**Friends of Koalas Habitat Days:** First Sat of every month at 10 am. Contact Patsy Hunt ph 5952 2407

**Koala Count** at the Koala Conservation Centre, second Thursday of every month at 10 am.

**Biosphere - Bass Coast Round Table** meets at San Remo on the third Friday of every month at 8 pm.

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## FROM THE PRESIDENT

**Dear Members,**

The Environment Forum was a GREAT SUCCESS! It also was most encouraging as we heard of the splendid work being done by groups throughout the Shire. Splendid work also happened before and during the Forum. Special thanks go to Christine Grayden, Penny Manning, John Eddy, Simon Eddy, Neil Beddoe, and everyone else who helped on the day. On behalf of PICS I received a certificate from the Shire recognizing our Coast Action work at Red Rocks - a certificate which SHOULD have been received by one or all of the three excellent leaders we've had for this project: Greg Johnson, Rose Thomas and Gillian Collins.

The formation of the Bass Coast Branch of the National Trust could be a step forward. Over the years, the National Trust has worked with PICS on a number of planning issues, and a local branch would strengthen this liaison.

So I hope to see you at TWO MEETINGS: our own General Meeting on Saturday, September 24th and the National Trust meeting on Saturday, October 8th, 3.30 pm for 4.00 p.m. at the Kilcunda Hall.

On Sunday September 25th at 10 a.m. there will be a Working Bee at Red Rocks - all the usual stuff - picking up rubbish, weeding, and, hopefully, some more planting!

With best wishes,

**Margaret Hancock, President.**

P.S. We STILL NEED a Treasurer - training provided! What about YOU?

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BASS COAST SHIRE ENVIRONMENTAL GROUPS'  
FORUM REPORT

Newhaven Hall Saturday 20 August, 1pm  10pm

**COAST WALK** (time approx 1 hr)

The walk, led by Neil Stewart of Newhaven Coast Action Group, and Derek Hibbert, showcased the impressive revegetation work of the N.C.A.G. over the past 10 years along the cliffs of the Newhaven foreshore from Boys Home Rd to just west of the marina. The walk's 23 participants were provided with coloured photos covering the period 1996-2005, which helped them appreciate the success of the plantings, and the extent of the work undertaken.

Over the years the activities of the N.C.A.G. have generally been working progressively eastward from Boys Home Rd, and are now hoping to link in with the planned expansion of the Newhaven Marina where an additional 60-70 berths are to be provided. The enclosing bank will be revegetated, after existing Kikuyu is controlled and access restricted to encourage an already increasing use by shore birds.

Most recent Coast Action work has concentrated on the small bay just west of the marina, where prolific weed growth (kikuyu, blue periwinkle, oxalis, blackberry, has been controlled using 'Roundup' (plus 'Oust') or 'Brushoff' and planted last year. A small section of cliff erosion close to the marina will be addressed with the trial of planting of a hundred white mangrove seedlings close to the stony beach.

The philosophy of Coast Action is that existing indigenous plants should not be interfered with, but where significant views of the sea and shore already exist, they should be retained. The design of any revegetation project takes this into account, and at Newhaven, taller plants are used towards the bottom of cliffs, and only low growing ones used near the top. Neighbouring residents are notified of this approach before planting commences to avoid hostility.

At another site, Newhaven College year 9 students have assisted in a replanting project by removing hawthorn, Pittosporum and periwinkle and planting out into 'Weedmat' - a continuous carpet-like mulch that prevents the periwinkle from regenerating. A length of fence was also erected to discourage inappropriate foot traffic through the planting. Neil Stewart noted that Weedmat seems best used only in these special circumstances, as it can be a nuisance, tending to slip down slopes and dislodge plants establishing in it. Small cardboard mats ('pizza trays') around individual plants seem to work better.

The walk continued along Forrest Ave to a point where the garden escape Tecoma had created a major thicket, which had to be slashed before planting out 2 ½ years ago. Since then, spot spraying has been undertaken, and now very little

of the weed remains.

Descending to "The Pines" beach, walkers were shown some remnant vegetation of boobiallas, and hedge wattle (indigenous, or brought in by early settlers for farm hedges?). Sand was brought in to form this artificial beach 30 years ago. The cliffs, originally heavily infested with kikuyu, have been the site of a major revegetation project, where now correas, saltbush, boobiallas, coast pomaderris and hedge wattle are well established and almost self-sustaining. Step access has also been upgraded.

The walk concluded at the Boys Home Rd foreshore where, five years ago, a heavy infestation of African Cornflag was controlled with herbicide and fire. The replanting in Spring 2001 has yielded impressive results, with a dense indigenous shrub community now established.

## **DISPLAYS**

The following groups arranged displays in the hall to highlight their work:

WESBOC - Westernport Bird Observers Club  
Silverleaves Conservation Association  
West Gippsland Regional Library Service - display of books/videos relating to the environment  
Powlett River - South Gippsland Conservation Society  
Australian Rare Fauna Research Association  
Landcare - Urban Landcare  
Bass Coast Landcare  
Phillip Island Landcare  
Friends of the Koalas  
Friends of Wonthaggi Heath lands and Coastal Reserve  
Corinella Heath lands project  
Parks Victoria - Marine National Parks in Westernport  
PICS - Phillip Island Conservation Society Children's Environment Mornings

## **GROUPS FORUM**

Spokespersons for each group introduced by Margaret Hancock, President, PICS. Various groups present were given the opportunity to explain the function of their group and outline current projects and interests.

*NATIONAL TRUST - Richard Prentice - Regional Co-ordinator*  
Richard outlined the work of the Trust, and indicated a need to forge stronger links with local groups across the state in order to achieve a better coverage of heritage. While the Trust's main concern had been with built heritage, increasingly community concern was regarding landscape heritage. The Trust was now trying to 'catch up' with this public interest, but as yet was not well resourced for preservation of landscapes. The most recent branch established covers South Gippsland, and is mainly concerned with wind farm proposals. Moves are

afoot to set up a branch to cover the Bass Coast area, with Helen Bull as instigator. (A meeting of interested people was held after the forum)

*AUSTRALIAN RARE FAUNA RESEARCH ASSOCIATION -  
Mike Cleeland*

Mike read a report of a recent sighting from Victoria, suggestive of a Tasmanian Tiger. The group's function is to collect and assess such reports and maintain a database.

*BARB MARTIN BUSH BANK - Bec Jack, Co-ordinator*

The B.M.B.B. aims to propagate 60,000 indigenous trees and shrubs annually. Most are used in Landcare and Coast Action projects locally, and others are purchased by the general public. Volunteers have an enjoyable time assisting the running of the BMBB, and gather there on Wednesday mornings and the first Saturday morning of each month.

*SOUTH GIPPSLAND CONSERVATION SOCIETY*

*Powlett River Group*

The group is concerned that extensive areas of public land adjoining the river (one chain reserve for all significant waterways) are not accessible to the public and have been effectively annexed by adjacent farmers. Nothing formal has been done yet, but the Dept of Sustainability and Environment is prepared to act if there is enough public interest. Farmers have not been approached yet. The area of interest totals over 60 hectares, and extends over 50 km of stream.

*Inverloch Group - Joe Sutton*

Development pressure is the major issue in the Shire. The group has had significant achievements in revegetation of Screw Creek and Ayr Creek.

*FRIENDS OF KOALAS - Patsy Hunt*

This organisation was formed 15 years ago. Sadly, the problems of habitat loss and overdevelopment continue, with hardly any koalas left around the townships. The population at the Koala Conservation Centre remains strong, however, and habitat around rural areas is generally improving, with such initiatives as the wildlife corridors.

The group holds a Habitat Day and a Koala count at the KCC each month. The count is conducted with a ranger, covers the woodland area of the KCC and usually locates about 20 koalas. Ear tags are checked to identify individual koalas, and a Caramello koala is your wage for the day!

The group has worked hard at weed control in the Oswin Roberts Reserve, and now there is hardly any ragwort left. Plantings within fenced coups are now at a size where fences are hardly needed anymore. Koalas, however, are very few.

The campaign for reduction of traffic speed to 80/50 kph continues.

## **CORONET BAY RESIDENTS & RATEPAYERS ASSOCIATION**

Between Coronet Bay and Corinella, a significant grove of Banksias includes a small sector of privately owned land on the foreshore. The group has spent 12-18 months negotiating with the landowner who intends to develop the site. A compromise to allow for five building envelopes and protection of significant trees with a covenant is subject to DSE approval.

Another development being contested is a 'sporting village' with 600 homes on the coast in this area.

## **FRIENDS OF WONTHAGGI HEATHLAND**

A small group of volunteers who over the past 10 years, with guidance from Parks Victoria, have cleaned up rubbish and worked hard at weed control (particularly *Pinus pinaster*). One section, called "Brown's Lease" has been planted out with heath species. A detailed photographic record and data-base of the heath land's flora and fauna has been developed, and 5-10 new species are identified each year. Walks and excursions are conducted every second month.

**STEVE FUERY**, as an individual working in association with the West Gippsland Regional Waste Management Authority, has worked on several projects to reduce litter in Cowes. He has targeted cigarette butts, recycling by business, and increasing awareness of litter within the community. The actor "Vox Bandicoot" made an appearance on the busy streets of Cowes last summer to heighten awareness.

The PI Retail Association has embraced the campaign aiming to make PI plastic bag free. In environmental terms, paper bags are twice as 'expensive' as plastic bags, so the aim is to go for reusable green or calico bags.

## **WESBOC - Westernport Bird Observers Club**

The group covers the area including Phillip Island, Wonthaggi, Inverloch, Grantville. It conducts two outings a month to different locations, on the 2nd Saturday and last Friday. Like many groups, member numbers are smaller now, and in need of younger ones.

Bird counts are done regularly, and include Hooded Plover, Cape Barren Geese and Waders. A database on birds in our area is maintained. The group is also active in providing submissions regarding planning appeals and other projects.

## **SILVERLEAVES PROGRESS ASSOCIATION - Ethel Temby**

The Silverleaves area, consisting entirely of sand, extends eastward from Cowes and abuts the reserve that extends to Observation Point. Originally, the group mobilised to combat severe beach erosion which threatened homes. Brushwood laid on fore-dunes helped to accumulate windblown sand.

Over the years working parties have also addressed ruts in

unmade roads, weed control, and (with the PI Shire Council) erection of groynes on the beach.

Increasingly, new property owners are illegally removing foreshore vegetation to improve their sea views. The Shire hasn't the resources to monitor the conditions it places on building/planning permits. The old sense of community is sadly being lost, partly because very few permanent residents live there now. The Association's newsletter tries to maintain some sense of community.

### *PHILLIP ISLAND NATURE PARK - Graeme Burgan*

The PINP is responsible for the management of 2000 hectares of reserves from Cape Woolamai to the Nobbies. The commercial operations, centred on the Penguin Parade, feed funds into the environmental management program. While recent media attention has focused on the commercial operations, Graeme concentrated on outlining the various environmental and research programs. These include:

#### 1. Fox Eradication Program

With the help of the local farmers, foxes have been controlled over the years, but recent DNA studies have shown foxes aren't immigrating to the island, so eradication is feasible.

#### 2. Kikuyu Control at Cape Woolamai

Kikuyu smothers shearwater-nesting habitat, preventing access to burrows. Recent experimental control with herbicide sprayed from a helicopter has been effective, with negligible impact on adjoining vegetation, and suggests the method is worth expanding next year.

#### 3. Boxthorn control at Cat Bay

Some very large spreading 'trees' bulldozed.

#### 4. Shearwater Patrol

Aims to rescue young shearwaters stranded on roads during their maiden flights. They may be attracted to lights, or perhaps the roads under the lights look like water. Once down, they can't take off again. This year 140 birds were rescued, and another 140 killed. Turning lights off at the bridge was very effective, reducing the stranded birds from 30 one night to 3 the next with lights off. However, VicRoads refuses to allow this to be used due to safety issues. Also, short-term speed limits at Surf Beach are no longer allowed.

#### 5. Research

Tracking devices have been fitted to seals for 3-4 years now, providing lots of good data. Depth of dive is also monitored now. Transducers are also being fitted to penguins. These can even monitor the number of times a penguin opens its beak to take in food.

### *MORNINGTON PENINSULA & WESTERNPORT*

### *BIOSPHERE P/L - Neil Beddoe*

Our local biosphere was established two years ago, after a nine-year campaign. Of 393 biospheres proclaimed worldwide, 13 are in Australia, and three in Victoria. Ours is the only one in Australia near a major city. It is a UNESCO-based project, and has to satisfy a number of criteria, one of which is that the three levels of government - Commonwealth, State and local - must work together with the community to produce results. It aims to highlight sustainable actions within the community. Bass Coast is one of six shire-based 'round-tables' that support the Biosphere concept.

### *CAPE WOOLAMAI COAST ACTION - John Ryan*

This group - about five years old - concerns itself with the foreshore area at 'Safety Beach' on Cape Woolamai. Most of the activities involve weed removal and revegetation. Envirofund grants and Bass Coast Shire assistance have been drawn on to put in controlled access tracks to reduce the amount of disturbance to foreshore vegetation.

A recent project focused on revegetation at 'Homestead Point'. Nearby landowner, Mr Bruno Grollo, paid for the pine trees to be removed, and subsequently 3000 tubestock were planted.

### *CORINELLA FORESHORE RESERVE COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT - Anwyn Martin*

The COM was appointed under Dept of Sustainability and Environment from community members, and is responsible for five km of foreshore, including the caravan park, boat ramp and associated parking, public amenities and access tracks.

The walking track between Corinella and Coronet Bay passes through significant stands of banksias and sheoaks, with significant midden nearby. The Committee is also involved in the restoration of a heath land that has been grazed for 100 years. 4000 mixed heath land species have been planted here. An ongoing objective is to try to change community culture and attitudes.

### *PHILLIP ISLAND LANDCARE - Lisa Wangman*

Urban Landcare, covering Phillip Island and San Remo, provides an opportunity for non-farm people to be involved in Landcare. It aims to encourage the planting of indigenous species, and to run a series of seminars on sustainability - e.g. wise water use, energy use, garden design). Working with the Shire, it hopes to contribute to booklets on aspects of sustainability. New development projects will be especially encouraged to incorporate sustainability features into their designs.

### *BASS COAST COASTAL ALLIANCE*

The Alliance comprises about a dozen community groups coming together as a forum to exchange ideas, and to pressure government at Shire or State level regarding development proposals. Contacts are Dave Sutton, Veronica



Dowman and Gary Dowman.

*KILCUNDA FORESHORE COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT -  
Heather Mabilia*

The transfer of management of the extensive foreshore reserve at Kilcunda-Powlett River is nearly complete. The volunteer COM ceased operations in June 2004. Three former committee members have been acting in a caretaker role since that date. Prior to the cessation date, the Committee prepared discussion papers and initiating discussions with Bass Coast Shire Council, DSE, various politicians, the Minister, CEO of Parks Vic, and in August 2004 obtained agreement to transfer the management responsibilities to the appropriate bodies. Unfortunately it had taken more than 12 months to finalise these arrangements. The outcome is:

The Bass Coast Shire will become the COM for the area from Kilcunda Cemetery through to Mabilia Rd (the township and high use recreation areas);

Parks Vic will take over management of the area east of Kilcunda Cemetery, through to eastern side of the Mouth of the Powlett River (Powlett River Reserve)

When the transfer of COM responsibilities are finalized it is intended to establish a Kilcunda Coast Action Group for the area west of the cemetery to Mabilia Rd only, operating under the umbrella of the Bass Coast Shire.

**GUEST SPEAKER: DENIS COX, COAST CARE  
FACILITATOR, PORT PHILLIP EAST, DSE**

Using a Power Point presentation, (and a cantankerous computer!), Denis discussed some general issues of land management. Against a background of a legacy of management which is both ancient and recent, and rapidly increasing pressures of urban growth, we need to be clear what we want from the land. We need to know which uses are not sustainable, and what the consequences are. The best ways to manage land are not well known, and land, both private and public, is often in the hands of people who are not competent managers.

Denis drew attention particularly to extinction of species due to habitat loss that is happening all over the world. Most of Australia is disturbed more than SE Asia because Australia is generally flat and accessible. The adage "Think globally, act locally" is still a good motto.

Good things are happening around the world however. Denis noted the Nobel Peace prize was awarded to a Kenyan woman, Wangari Maathai, who founded the Green Belt Movement, which is a huge tree- planting project in Africa.

Denis praised the excellent projects undertaken in our own

region by so many volunteers. He praised, and showed photos of, the work undertaken by the following groups:

Corinella Foreshore committee of Management - revegetation works  
Cape Patterson Coast Action - improved access  
San Remo - Parks Victoria - tree planting  
Newhaven Coast Action - revegetation and improved access  
PINP - tree planting, education, weed control, habitat protection  
Kilcunda Foreshore COM - revegetation, access control, dune restoration  
Seagrass Partnership at Coronet Bay - trials on mangroves and seagrass  
Somers Foreshore COM - revegetation, education  
Shoreham Foreshore COM - revegetation, education  
Friends of Rosebud Foreshore - revegetation  
McCrae Homestead Group - revegetation, habitat recovery  
Capel Sound Foreshore COM  
Friends of Flinders  
Balnarring Foreshore COM - 10,000 manna gums planted  
Cannons Creek Foreshore COM - weed (blue bell creeper) control  
Mornington Peninsula Shire Council  
City of Casey  
Bass Coast Shire

Of 2000 km of coastline, 3% is in private hands. Most of the rest is managed by Committees of Management, although parts are not managed at all (e.g. Grantville to Lang Lang).

Denis concluded by thanking all Coast Action groups for their support, and urged everyone to help manage our land by joining local groups, and support the larger conservation groups such as Australian Conservation Foundation and World Wide Fund for Nature.

**FINALE - DEREK HIBBERT - Bass Coast Shire  
Environmental/Coastal Officer**

"A Snapshot of Volunteer Groups in Council Foreshore and Bushland Reserves"

The work of the following volunteer groups was recognized and certificates of appreciation issued by Derek, on behalf of the Shire:

Ventnor West Coast Action - shearwater habitat restoration  
Red Rocks Coast Action - sand dune stabilization, weed control, access  
Cowes Coast Action - weed control, revegetation  
Friends of Silverleaves Foreshore - weed removal  
Rhyll Coast Action - revegetation  
Cape Woolamai Coast Action - revegetation, weed removal, access track

Friends of Tenby Point Foreshore - weed control, revegetation, access planting  
Cape Paterson Coast Action - access, weed control  
Inverloch Coast Action - umbrella group - access (7 sets of stairs), revegetation  
Inverloch Residents and Ratepayers Association  
South Gippsland Conservation Society Projects C/ee - wetland/creek restoration

The Shire thanks all volunteer groups.

**CLOSE** - The forum closed with Margaret Hancock, President of PICS, thanking the main presenters, and everyone present for coming.

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## **SEAL ROCKS - POINT GRANT**

Response from Paul Smith, Acting Executive Director, Conservation and Recreation, Department of Sustainability & Environment, to our request for information re: the redevelopment of the Seal Rocks Victoria building:

"I refer to your recent letter to the Minister for Environment regarding the announcement in the 2005-06 State Budget relating to the future of the former Seal Rock Sea Life Centre at Phillip Island. The Minister has requested that I respond on his behalf.

The Government had considered a number of wide ranging views arising from the community consultation process regarding the future of the Centre. In determining this outcome, an estimate of the potential number of visitors was considered resulting in the best long-term solution being the recommission the Centre to compliment the services already provided by the Phillip Island Nature Park.

In respect of the title of the site, it is reserved for public purposes and the Phillip Island Nature Park is the Committee of Management over the site together with other lands forming the Nature Park."

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## **RED ROCKS COAST ACTION**

Thanks to Gillian, Bruce, John, Ronnie and Margaret who labored mightily at our last Red Rocks working bee to plant several hundred trees in difficult conditions east of the car park on the foreshore along the 'fire access track'. These areas have recently been cleared of woody weeds, and we need to establish some indigenous vegetation to help keep the

herbaceous weeds down.

We need lots more workers for the next working bee if we are to have the desired impact. Please meet at Red Rocks car park on Sunday September 25th at 10 a.m. Tools are provided.

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## **Come for a Walk!**

*Come for a Walk! Exploring Phillip Island* is the title for the book of 20 walks prepared with assistance from many Islanders. This community project has been sponsored by Landcare and supported by the Shire with a Community Grant. Profits will be distributed to local environmental and historical groups.

It is planned to launch the book late November, making it available for purchase as a Christmas gift. Watch local papers for launch details. Further information: 59567586.

*Cathie Roby*

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## **CHILDREN'S ENVIRONMENT MORNINGS**

Thanks to Coastcare/Coast Action funding to pay for the room hire, we are now able to run another season of Children's Environment Mornings - see the dates for this year in the diary section. All PICS members are welcome to come along and see the sessions in operation. Contact Christine Grayden for more details: ph 5956 8501 or email [cgrayden@waterfront.net.au](mailto:cgrayden@waterfront.net.au)

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## **July G.M. Speaker: Paul Smith, Bass Coast Shire Council "The Environment Department: The year past and the year ahead"**

The Bass Coast Shire Environment Team currently comprises the Environment Manager - Paul - the Environment/Coastal Officer - Derek - the Environment Projects Officer - Clare - and four Landcare staff. The Environment Department (ED) currently operates within the Planning and Environment Department. The provision of Environment Programs is considered a Council core business and is highlighted in Strategic Objectives No.1 & 2 within the Council Plan 20-05. The ED's vision is "To provide policy direction, guidance, support, information, education programs and infrastructure

projects that leads to the improved well being of the community by ensuring the sustainability of the natural system."

The ED's Objective is "To be recognized and accepted by the community as the provider of relevant policy direction, accurate information on local environmental issues, effective education programs and high quality infrastructure projects that ensures the sustainability of the natural systems and the continued enjoyment and appreciation of the natural areas."

### *Coast and Bushland*

The ED provides Coastal and Bushland Reserve, and Land and Catchment management; environmental planning and policy direction and environmental education programs and information. They manage Crown land, such as Coastal reserves, where Bass Coast Shire Council is Committee of Management under the Crown Land Reserves Act (1978), and various Bushland reserves, both Crown and Council owned reserves. These include Ventnor Common, Saltwater Creek, Silverleaves Reserve No. 1, Ayr Creek, part of Screw Creek and Thompson's reserve.

Paul described what the ED actually does for these reserves, including, among many other things:

- Prepare management/master plans and risk assessments;
- Source funding(e.g. grants);
- Manage Coast Action and other volunteer groups;
- Arrange approvals (from Council, Crown Land Reserves Act, Planning, Building, Coastal Management Act, Aboriginal groups); apply for funding;
- Provide design and technical advice;
- Supervise upgrades of foreshore assets and infrastructure - e.g. boardwalks, toilet blocks, etc.
- Assist in investigations in relation to vegetation removal on Council managed reserves;
- Implement fire prevention actions in reserves;
- Assist in emergency response for oil spills; prepare, arrange and monitor weed control programs and revegetation programs.

### *Land/Catchment Management*

- The ED employs, houses and manages Landcare staff, acts in partnership for large Landcare projects and distributes and promotes Landcare information and programs;
- Funds specific programs and projects, including the roadside weed abatement program;
- Runs the Land Management Biodiversity Incentive Scheme, including the Rural Rate Rebate.

### *Environment Policy Direction*

The ED provides Bass Coast with specific environmental input into Federal/State/Regional policy

preparation, and as a member of a range of local, regional and State committees, as well as providing 'expert' environmental information on planning permits referred to the ED.

### *Major Achievements*

Paul described the ED's many achievements in the past two years, including, on Phillip Island, management plans, foreshore and landscape works and environmental and noxious weed removal.

Shire-wide the ED has commenced (among other things) a 'drain stenciling' program with local schools and the ButtsOut Campaign, both designed to raise awareness of the problem of rubbish washing into our waterways, bays and oceans. In the future this will be expanded to include best storm water management practice guidelines for Council staff, builders, etc. The ED also organized the World Environment Day Expo in San Remo in partnership with community groups (including PICS) and other reserve management agencies, and completed the Indigenous Plants of Bass Coast booklet.

Paul listed the projects planned for the future, then outlined what he saw as the major issues facing the local environment. These included:

- significant increase in use from the increasing numbers of visitors and residents;
- differing community expectations for 'public' reserves e.g. active versus passive use, urban and rural;
- fire risk associated with the interface between urban and vegetation area;
- ageing infrastructure, eg toilets, picnic facilities;
- lack of detailed information on fauna and flora in some reserve areas.

He suggested means of addressing these pressures such as designating 'activity' and 'conservation' zones and managing these accordingly; providing high quality facilities which encourage use of areas that can actually cope with high numbers of visitors; protect and enhance areas of high conservation value; prepare management plans for all reserves that will allow a coordinated and integrated approach to management and, of course, involve the local community in planning and management.

Paul finished his talk by telling us the results of the 'best value review' undertaken of Council operations in 2005, which identified the strengths and weaknesses of the ED, concluding that 'a gap in Council policy exists because there is no overall Bass Coast Environment Strategy'.

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