

The Penguin

Newsletter of Phillip Island Conservation Society Third Quarter,
September 2007



Newsletter

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Dates for your Diary

Sat 29 Sep: General Meeting. Tim Bloomfield, Vermin Officer, PINP: 'The Big Challenge: fox eradication' 8 p.m. Meeting Room, Heritage Centre, Cowes. Followed by meeting. All Welcome.

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

Sat Oct 6: Children's Environment Morning: Skye Winder 'Kakoda Track Pack'. Slides, pack contents, tent pitching, art activity. 11 a.m. - 12 noon. Meeting Room, Heritage Centre, Cowes.

DATE TBA: **Candidates' Forum for Federal Election.** Hopefully to be held Friday night 2 weeks before election day. Watch local paper for details. We have the first question to candidates: Please forward suggestions to Margaret Hancock ph/fax 5952 2557.

Sat Nov 3: Children's Environment Morning. Watch the local paper and Cowes library desk for details.

Sat 17 Nov: Seasonal Walk: 'Bimbadeen'. Too wet for winter, but should be fine for spring! Located between Pyramid Rock Rd and Berry Beach Rd on Back Beach Rd (Look for balloons on gate). Award winning Landcare farm. Meet at gate, 2 p.m.

Sat Dec 1: Children's Environment Morning: Ash Reed 'Koalas'. Fun talk + mask making. Venue/times as for October.

Sat Jan 5: Children's Environment Morning: Watch the local paper and Cowes library desk for details.

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 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 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,

It's just before dawn on Wattle Day. The wind has subsided and all is set fair for our 'Barb Party' at the Bush Bank. Time moves quickly, it's almost nine years since Barb died, and an often asked question at the Bush Bank is: "Who was Barb Martin?" So, today, PICS and Friends of the Koalas will present a framed photograph of Barb and the obituary tribute to her that appeared in *The Advertiser* in December 1998.

We have just received the Amendment C46 Panel Report which amongst other matters covers the Vegetation Protection Overlay for Phillip Island. Together with the Westernport Bird Observers Club and FOK, we argued strongly against the Shire Council's proposal to virtually abandon any vegetation protection on Phillip Island. The Shire's argument seemed mainly motivated by the cost of administering the Island VPO, so we welcomed the Panel's comment:

"The degree and nature of control over vegetation should not just be restricted for administrative convenience."

PICS has fought long and hard first for the creation of the VPO and subsequently for its continuance, so we greatly appreciate the Panel's response to C46.

Actually, PICS seems to fight 'long and hard' on many fronts, and you will be able

to read all about it when the History, which Christine Grayden is writing and David and Jocelyn Bradley are editing, is published in 2008 in time for our 40th birthday.

There's much work with planning issues over the coming months. The 'Big One' is the Linfox Appeal which is expected to run for sixteen days at VCAT in Melbourne, commencing on Monday 12th November. The Appeal will be heard from Monday to Thursday for four weeks, so, come along when you can and sit in the gallery. It's great to have support at Appeals, and we always get a chance to talk during the lunch break. Special thanks go to Marg Johnson and her team for all their preliminary work.

Wherever you are, I hope you enjoy the Spring Planting. I hope to see you at our General Meeting on Saturday, September 29, when we will hear all about how to eradicate foxes from Phillip Island! AND don't forget our Red Rocks Coast Action working bee the day after, commencing at 10 a.m.

Yours sincerely,

Margaret Hancock, President.

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Barb Martin Bush Bank

Jenny Toy commenced her position last month as the new Barb Martin Bushbank Co-ordinator. She has brought to the Bushbank considerable experience and has quickly slipped in to her new role.

Jenny has a strong Natural Resources background combined with her tertiary qualification — Bachelor of Applied Science/Bachelor of Arts, Deakin University (1995-98), majoring in Natural Resource Management, Geography, Computing and Sociology. Jenny's previous position was as the Indigenous Nursery Manager at the City of Kingston where she worked with schools and organized programs for volunteers and friends groups. Her role involved teaching environmental principles, 'hands-on planting', propagation, plant identification and seed collection. During this period she was able to develop strong relationships with the relevant government agencies.

The importance of a strong community focus, especially in raising the overall environmental profile is evident in Jenny's considerable community volunteer work. The Bushbank Committee is delighted with Jenny's appointment and look forward to working with her and she with the island community.

Anne Davie

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Children's Environment Mornings

Thanks to Denis Cox, our regional manager of Coast Action/Coastcare, we have funding for the room hire for this season's Children's Environment Morning. Thanks also to an anonymous donor, who donated \$50 towards materials for the sessions. We will run these on the first Saturday of each month from October until next June.

Speakers are currently being arranged. You are always welcome to drop in. Sessions are from 11 a.m. until 12 noon in the Heritage Centre Meeting Room. Children need to be accompanied by an adult.

Thanks to Skye Winder for helping organize the program and being our first speaker in October, when she will tell us about her wonderful trek along the Kokoda Trail. Skye is planning to trip around Australia next year, so if you think you would like to help in her place please contact me on 5956 8501.

Christine Grayden

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Winter Seasonal Walk Koala Conservation Centre

Nine members participated on our winter walk in glorious weather at the KCC. Prior to the walk PICS historian Christine Grayden gave a brief talk about the history of koalas on Phillip Island.

The first koalas were actually brought here from other parts of southwest Gippsland in the 1890s by tree cutters working there but living on the island. These koalas did not flourish, but 50 released in 1920 from French Island did; so much so that translocations by the Fisheries and Game commenced in the 1940s and continued until the 1970s, by which time over 3000 koalas had been removed. For most of this time the koalas were under the control of the Koala Reserves Committee of Management, which included PICS members Jack Oswin, Murray Hilgendorf and

Bert Grayden with PICS initiator, Ken Pound, as its second ranger.

After the 1970s, koala numbers plummeted due to increased mortality from cars, dog attacks and the urino-genital disease chlamydia. PICS initiated the annual koala counts in 1985, and lobbying from PICS caused the establishment of the Koala Working Group which eventually recommended the establishment of the KCC (opened in 1992). PICS furthered the cause of koalas on Phillip Island by having the then Minister for Conservation, Kaye Setches (a PICS member) launch the Friends of Koalas in January, 1990. (More detail on this subject appears in the PICS History to be published in 2008.)

Although still August, Spring was in the air, as galahs competed with each other searching out nesting holes and kookaburras called out their territories. A highlight was seeing at close-hand a doe with her five and a half month old joey at the close viewing area. Unfortunately a crowd built up and the doe became restless, so the ranger had to put her and her joey carefully into a sack and move her to a safe tree. We walked through the forest and noticed that a good number of young trees had survived the drought, whilst many of the old blue gums had lost large limbs because of the drought. This was still a beautiful and rewarding walk.

Our next walk was to be our winter walk — at Bimbadeen, the Landcare award winning property of Bob and Anne Davie on Back Beach Road. Look for the balloons on the north side of the road between Pyramid Rock Rd and Berry Beach Rd, on Saturday November 17, starting at 2 p.m.

Christine Grayden

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A New Life Member For PICS Margaret Hancock

Margaret Hancock, PICS President since 1982, and Committee member before that from 1974, was made a Life Member of PICS at our last Annual General Meeting. The Citation read:

"Margaret's dedication to the cause of conservation on Phillip Island has extended from the practical 'hands on' work, to being an articulate spokes-woman for PICS on innumerable occasions, and a wonderful leader.

This Life Membership is indicative of the esteem in which Margaret is held by all PICS members."

Recently I asked Margaret about her conservation work:

Q: When did you first become interested in the environment?

MH: It's been a life-long interest. From when I was nought to eighteen we holidayed at Clunes on a dairy farm. I though it was Heaven. There were owls, magpies, snakes, cows, calves and tall scotch thistles much higher than me! My parents were gardeners. And at Ballarat we had the lake, where the swans were much bigger than I was for many years too!

Q. When did you first become involved in Phillip Island?

MH: When Brook Morgan-Payler (Phillip Island farmer) went to war his children came to Ballarat and attended my school. I was most impressed that they had koalas in their backyard at home. My first holiday on Phillip Island was in 1955.

Q. What was your early involvement with the environment of Phillip Island?

MH: I left teaching to come to live permanently here in 1971. But I was involved with the Tree and Garden Society first, then PICS from its inception (in 1968). We built our house here in 1970, but I was involved with T&G before that, mainly planting roadsides and out near the Nobbies.

Q. What do you consider your major achievement in terms of wildlife and habitat on Phillip Island?

MH: My work with Scott Campbell on Cape Woolamai; weed removal and tree planting. Cape Woolamai is a very special place.

Q. What do you consider your major achievement in terms of planning on Phillip Island?

MH: Trying to translate the Phillip Island Planning Scheme into the Bass Coast Shire Planning Scheme. In many ways, PI was ahead of its time in planning. Planning is the basis for everything. If you don't get your planning right, your land and water management right, you're wasting your time.

Q. What have you learnt along the way?

MH: Never resign in a huff! I was on the Cowes Foreshore Committee, which advised Council on the foreshore from the Nits to Point Grant. We met monthly and walked a section each time. Eventually we resigned because the Council was not taking our advice on board. We thought they'd renege, but they didn't, so it was a waste of time to resign.

I've also learnt that if you attend a meeting, take a copy of the constitution!

I also feel that much of what was done in terms of conservation on Phillip Island was ahead of its time. The Phillip Island Koala Reserve's Committee of Management was an excellent example.

Congratulations Margaret! May you have many more years ahead of involvement with PICS.

Christine Grayden

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Planning Backlash Forum in Melbourne 16.8.07

Six metro groups and 17 rural groups met with the Planning Minister, Justin Madden, in the Minister's office in East Melbourne. It is the second of such meetings where people with planning concerns in their municipalities have come together. It is the first time any Planning Minister has met with residents in this way. Mary Prost, a former Camberwell Councillor and active in the fight to save the Camberwell Railway Station, has been the driving force in lobbying for these meetings with the Minister. All groups shared a common concern about the pressure the huge increase in building approvals has created that are compromising community amenity and the natural environment. There was a 5 minute time limit on each group. It was wonderful to be with people who represented so many others in their communities, expressing in a very forthright way the development pressure issues that are causing so much angst and distress in their municipalities.

Ian Samuel and I gave the Phillip Island presentation which included the state and national significance of Phillip Island and the importance of good planning policy and decisions with regard to its future. The 10 point Recovery Plan for Phillip Island and San Remo was presented. The Motion passed at the previous night's Council meeting with regard to the Bass Coast Shire's concerns about the Desalination Plant planned for Wonthaggi was also presented. I was able to show a large digital

Plan planned for Wonthaggi was also presented. I was able to show a large digital photograph of the EcoResort and ... it highlighted the urgency with regard to inappropriate developments on significant landscape vistas.

We spoke of the need for the Minister to approve amendments to implement the Phillip Island and San Remo Design Framework without delay. The Minister was asked if he could himself amend the local planning scheme to introduce Significant Landscape Overlays (SLO's) to permanently protect the Island's south coast. This could be fast tracked as all the strategic work has already been done in his government's Coastal Spaces Strategy. We also spoke of the need for funds to undertake the necessary strategic planning to manage development including the creation of a Development Contributions Plan.

Some points that were raised at the Forum by other participants:

- Almost all groups in their presentations spoke of the need for the Minister to act quickly on the Structure Plans and that the community vision must be enshrined in these.
- Enormous concern about the failure of 2030 and the urgency of a Review. Development in Activity Zones is not working.
- Pakenham was quoted as absolutely bursting at the seams with uncontrolled growth.
- Some special areas have State planning policy protection. Concern about the increase in rural residential blocks. Melbourne sprawl is leaping into rural shires.
- Country is being 'lumped' with city planning policies and country towns are being compromised i.e. urbanization of rural areas. Bass Coast Shire had 48% of dwellings vacant on Census Night — the 3rd highest in the state.
- A much more considered response is needed by Councils before more land is made available for new subdivisions. Many towns and suburbs have lost their 'liveability'. VCAT is not the answer to a Fair Go. The desire for unlimited growth is undesirable and unsustainable.

Minister Madden said at the completion of the presentation that he will try and work as much as he can with issues that have been expressed today and thanked those present for their passion and their efforts. He is aware of the pile up of all the amendments on his desk, awaiting his approval. He will support the community's right to say how much development is acceptable. He was asked to please act quickly on Structure Plans. He stated he did not want to take planning powers away from Councils. He wants to strengthen local planning policy and a continuing improvement in planning.

The review of 2030 is due soon. The Minister said he was pleased that the Department is now called 'Planning and Community Development' and that should enable a closer relationship with communities. Mary Proust thanked the Minister for his time and presented him with a copy of 'Yes, Minister'!

People will ask was anything achieved? We will have to wait and see but we do know that our issues of concern have been expressed and noted by the Minister and his Department.

Anne Davie, 16.8.07

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Amendment c46 — Part 2 to the Bass Coast Planning Scheme — Panel Report

VEGETATION PROTECTION OVERLAY

The Panel acknowledges that this is a vexed issue but considers the following principles are important:

principles are important.

- Vegetation protection on Phillip Island is essential for conservation, habitat and landscape reasons. Mechanisms to protect vegetation should be appropriate, clear, easy to understand and not duplicative;
- The degree and nature of control over vegetation should not just be restricted for administrative convenience;
- Native vegetation in rural areas can be adequately protected by the requirements of Clause 52.17;
- Native vegetation on public reserves and roadside reserves strongly contributes to the character of the island the maintenance of habitat corridors and it therefore requires planning scheme protection via the VPO;
- Important introduced species in the rural areas, public reserves and roadside reserves should be identified by survey and be the subject of a separate VPO schedule;
- In urban areas, people should be afforded maximum flexibility to landscape their gardens. However, the removal, destruction and lopping of existing trees (both native and introduced) above minimum prescribed dimensions should require a permit;
- Pruning and maintenance of trees should not require a permit;
- Council should take a lead in educating the community on the importance of tree preservation as well as on desirable species to plant. Its pamphlets on indigenous plants and weed identification should be annually distributed with rate notices; and
- Infringement penalties should be reviewed and enforcement of illegal removal or destruction of vegetation heavily policed.

Bass Coast Planning Scheme Amendment C4 Parts 2 & 4. Panel Report: August 2007

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Red Rocks Coast Action

Thanks to the seven workers who did a major clean up of failed plantings (from the drought), and planted 200 trees at our last working bee in July. Derek Hibbert (BCSC Coastcare officer) and I put together an 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. (Gone are the days when we could do the same with \$5,000!) We are awaiting the outcome.

We have another working bee coming up on Sunday 30th September, which will probably involve rubbish collection and weed control. All tools, chemicals and gloves provided. A picnic lunch (supplied) follows. Meet at Red Rocks car park at 10 a.m. Enquiries phone me on 5956 8501.

Christine Grayden

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Notes From the Treasurer

Did you know you can make a tax-deductible donation to the PICS Public Fund? Lots of people have, with the fund growing from \$1000 to \$7,600 in 18 months! PICS is on the Register of Environmental Organisations of the Australian Government's Department of Environment and Heritage. Although you are unable to specify a purpose for your donation, as you are if you donate to the General Fund, there are a wide range of environmental purposes on which our Public Fund moneys can be spent.

The Public Fund is run by the PF Management Committee being Margaret

Hancock, Penny Manning and Robyn Dyall, who determine how the money will be spent within the guidelines laid down by the department, and the aims of PICS. (Thus far no money has been spent.)

Donors receive a personal letter of thanks from the President, Margaret Hancock, and an official tax-deductible receipt. Please note that donations to the General Fund are not tax deductible.

Membership subscriptions cannot go into the Public Fund account and are not tax deductible. Subscriptions are due at the start of each calendar year. Our thanks go to our Auditor, John Batty, who voluntarily audits our General Account in January, and our Public Fund account in July, in order to comply with the requirements of two different government departments!

Christine Grayden, Treasurer

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MINUTES OF GENERAL MEETING

Phillip Island Conservation Society Inc.

Minutes of General Meeting held July 7, 2007

7.00 pm. With the help of informative displays and various videos, Bob Thompson outlined his aim of establishing a Climate Change Group in this area. Several attendees signed up.

1. Welcome. The President opened the meeting at 8.00 pm and welcomed everyone, particularly the guest speaker.

2. Attendance and Apologies. As per attendance book.

3. The President introduced the guest speaker, Kelly O'Shanassy, the new CEO of Environment Victoria (<http://envict.org.au/>) who gave members an overview of the proposed desalination plant near Wonthaggi. "Environment Victoria is the peak non-government, not-for-profit environment organisation in Victoria. Together with 150 member groups, Environment Victoria works hard to lobby government ministers, secure better environmental legislation, increase funding for environment programs, and empower Victorians to create a greener future." There was a handout entitled 'Environment Victoria response to Our Water Our Future: the next stage of the government's water plan, released 19 June 2007.'
http://www.envict.org.au/file/EV_position_on_next%20stage_water_plan_July07.pdf

4. A vote of thanks was extended to Kelly O'Shanassy.

5. Minutes of the previous General Meeting, April 14, accepted.

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

Business Arising.

To General Business.

6. Correspondence.

Inwards

Outwards

- Wintersun (Woolshed) at Berry's Beach. Although there is a 25-year approval for development, BCSC has refused the planning permit for a health farm.

Moved: A. Martin Seconded: P. Manning Carried.

- Swan Bay Caravan Park (<http://www.rhyllraid.com>) It was Moved, G. Johnson, Seconded, A. Davie, that PICS sustain its objection to the proposed development. Carried.
- Eco Resort (<http://www.theislandcoresort.com.au/index.php>) PICS continues to object to the ongoing tree removal. Significant Roadside Vegetation. Slashed.

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

7. Treasurer's report.

General A/C Opening balance 1/5/07 \$ 7,857.87

Closing balance 29/6/07 \$10,543.80

Public Fund Opening balance 1/5/07 \$ 7,556.71

Closing balance 29/6/07 \$ 7,624.19

Membership:

Total current memberships: 66: 18 family; 29 single; 8 concession; 10 supporting; 1 group (Newhaven College)

Acknowledgement was made of the contribution by Anne Oswin of *The Advertiser* in running a notice regarding the Fighting Fund.

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

8. General Business.

Linfox (<http://www.linfox.com/linfox>): There was a Directions Hearing on Friday 6th July. The Hearing is now expected to take place over 3 weeks, 4 days per week, in November with Linfox calling 6 expert witnesses. A map of 'viewing spots' was shown, however the view of the proposed facility from Bass Strait is not mentioned.

It was proposed to approach The Advertiser regarding an interview.

Port of Hastings (<http://www.portofhastings.vic.gov.au>): A meeting was held last Thursday, 5th July, in Cowes, at which it was revealed that there is to be a multi-storey residential development designed to accommodate 7000 near the Frankston railway which is likely to be affected by the proposed 16 movements per day of freight trains up to 11/2 kilometres long between Hastings/Crib Point and Melbourne. The Port of Hastings is essentially Toll Holdings (<http://www.toll.com.au/>).

World Environment Day (<http://www.unep.org/wed/2007/english/>): A report by C. Grayden appeared in the latest issue of *The Penguin*, including this description of the item which generated the most interest " ... a life-size male Orca made by Christine and her daughter Karen using concreters' black plastic and white 'Contact'. The Orca proved to be indestructible, with one question asking the children to step it to work out how many metres long it was. Several teachers turned this into a full-scale mathematics exercise, with the children prompted to work out how many ways they could measure the Orca. It was stepped on, cart wheeled over, rolled over, the perimeter stepped, and then children stood along the length with arms stretched out and hands touching, and finally, seven children lay down head to toe! One teacher commented that his children would never forget how long ten metres were now!"

'Barb party': Saturday 1st September at noon at the Bushbank (bring a plate of finger food to share). The Committee is looking for a good photo of Barb. See also Newsletter.

Bob Dennis Memorial Plaque: involving the combined efforts of KCC, PICS, FOK and WESBOC will be unveiled at the Barb Party.

Mike Cleeland is going to the Museum (<http://melbourne.museum.vic.gov.au/>) on Monday 9th July and offered to take any samples for identification.

Sue Chadwick moved, G. Johnson seconded, that PICS endorses the setting up of a local Bass Coast Climate Action Group to include current members of PICS who have today indicated their interest in joining said group, and that member Bob Thompson be called upon to convene BCCAG until an initial steering group is established to progress the development of the group. Carried.

Scenic Isle Estate, colloquially known as Chinamans Estate: C. Grayden raised the issue of the ongoing use of the area by motorcyclists, reminding members that it borders Churchill Island Marine National Park (http://www.parkweb.vic.gov.au/1park_display.cfm?park=274) Over the years the issue has been raised with BCSC, PINP and the local police, so far to no avail. The situation is comparable in some ways to that at Summerlands with its buyback scheme and ongoing stalemate. Suggestions were made regarding compulsory acquisition and converting the area into parkland. It was suggested that a map of the estate be obtained from the BCSC showing the current ownership of each block and who is still paying rates. It was also suggested that the issue might be raised at the next Council Question Time. It was Moved, C. Grayden, Seconded, A. Martin, that PICS expresses concern to BCSC cc to PINP regarding the deterioration of the area, with a query regarding control over the usage of the area. Carried.

9. Next General Meeting 29th September 2007, 8.00 pm, Cowes Cultural Centre.

Working Bee Sunday, 8th July 2007, 10.00 am, Red Rocks.

Desalination meeting Thursday, 12th July 2007, 7.30 pm, Wonthaggi Town Hall.

10. Close. The meeting closed at 9.35 pm.

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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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PICS CONTACTS

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