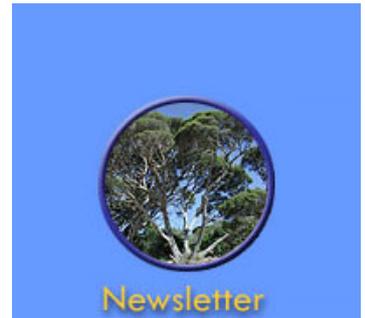


The Penguin

Newsletter of Phillip Island Conservation Society Second Quarter,
September 2008



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Dates for your Diary

Sat Sep 27: PICS G.M. 8 pm Meeting Room, Heritage Centre, Cowes. Andre Chiaradia, PINP: "Desal: The Spanish Experience".

Sun Sep 28: Working Bee Red Rocks, 10 a.m.

Sat Oct 11: Children's Environment Morning Phillip Island birds' nests. Heritage Centre Cowes 11am-12noon.

Fri Oct 24: EDO Workshop, vegetation law. Registration & details from Christine 5956 8501

Fri Nov 7: Meet the Candidates Forum (Shire Council elections) 7.30 p.m. - either Cultural or Heritage Centre depending on numbers of candidates.

Sat Nov 8: Children's Environment Morning Earthworms. Heritage Centre Cowes 11 am-12 noon

Sat Nov 8: Bass Coast Shire Environment Groups Get together. Hosted by Corinella Foreshore Committee. 4 p.m. Information from Christine Grayden ph 5956 88501

Sat Nov 15: Walk Against Warming Federation Square, Melbourne, 1 p.m.

Sat Nov 22: NB Change of date - Seasonal Walk McHaffie's Lagoon. 2 pm.

Sat Dec 13: Children's Environment Morning subject TBA Heritage Centre Cowes 11 am-12 noon

Sat Jan 10: Children's Environment Morning subject TBA Heritage Centre Cowes 11 am-12noon

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,

When you read the Minutes of the General Meeting held in July, you will be saddened to read, under 'correspondence', of the resignation of Marg and Greg Johnson from the Committee. Marg and Greg have given extraordinary service to PICS over more than 20 years. We all have benefited from Marg's zealous work as Secretary and her extraordinary efforts in co-ordinating various Appeals to VCAT. Greg's knowledge of the planning process and his ability to clearly express opinion has been the basis of many PICS submissions. We wish Marg and Greg continuing success in their work for the environment, and particular success when Greg again contests his seat on Nillumbik Council.

In November, Shire Council elections will be held throughout Victoria. Our "Meet the Candidates" forum for the Bass Coast Shire Council election will be held on Friday November 7 at 7.30 p.m. in either the Cultural or Heritage Centre. Bass Coast, along with all Shires, need candidates with an environmental concern - have YOU thought of standing for election?

The Desalination Saga continues - at the time of writing we have received no response to our letter to the Minister! The EES is available for comment. You can inspect the full text at the Library in Cowes. It is a VERY LONG EES and will take many hours to go through thoroughly. Please find time to make your comment.

The date of the November Seasonal Walk has been changed from the third Saturday in November to the 22nd November. This will enable members to take part in the Walk Against Warming at Federation Square on Saturday November 15 at 1 p.m. Consider making a banner and joining the march! The cause definitely needs all the voices/marchers we can muster at this point in time.

Our Guest Speaker at the General Meeting on September 27 will be Dr Andre Chiaradia from the Phillip Island Nature Park. Andre has recently been to Spain primarily to do work associated with Penguins, but he stayed on to inspect various desalination plants along the Mediterranean Coast, so his talk will be particularly topical. We hope to also have a member of Your Water Your Say along to give us the latest update on the proposed Kilcunda-Wonthaggi desalination plant. I hope that you will be there to hear it!

With best wishes,

Margaret Hancock, President.

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Campaigner for a Safe Climate Future

Members of our Society, and the local community generally, were shocked to learn of the sudden and unexpected death of Bob Thompson recently. Bob was a passionate environmentalist, a PICS member, and, notably, the convenor of the Bass Coast Climate Action Group, formed last year. He died while out walking along Cape Woolamai Rd, apparently suffering a heart attack.

Born in Essendon, Bob grew up in Frankston and graduated in Physics from Monash University. He then began teaching at secondary level before moving to the TAFE system, completing 30 years service. He was an avid bushwalker, relishing the great outdoors, and other passions included bike riding and music. With a move to Phillip Island five years ago, he undertook work with Parks Victoria and Landcare, planting trees and controlling weeds, and

undertook work with Parks Victoria and Landcare, planting trees and controlling weeds, and became increasingly involved in community affairs. He was an active member of The Greens, dogged campaigner against inappropriate local development at Cape Woolamai, and an outspoken critic of the failings of local government and land management. However, he is best remembered for his passionate concerns regarding climate change and the need to awaken the community to the real emergency approaching. To this end he formed the Bass Coast Climate Action Group, (launched at a PICS GM) and was an active participant in the Climate Emergency Network. His friends and colleagues will always remember the keen intellect, energy, tenacity and persistence that made Bob a champion of environmental causes.

John Eddy

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Red Rocks Coast Action

Thanks to John, Gary, Bruno, Shirley, Ross, Mike and BCSC's Derek Hibbert who helped out on Sunday 27th July, planting into brush matting already laid by Bass Coast shire staff. About 200 plants went in, including some *Rhagodia* grown by students of Koo Wee Rup Secondary College as well as coast wattle, knobby clubrush, coast daisy, coast saltbush and white correa. The foredune requires fencing and a walkway from the bottom of the staircase to the edge of the foredune will be completed by a contractor. A corridor was left in the planting for this purpose. However, there will be further planting required - probably next winter - once the walkway is finished. The next Red Rocks working bee will be 10 a.m. on Sunday September 28, which will be for rubbish collection, weed control and tidying up of older plantings.

Christine Grayden

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BARB MARTIN BUSH BANK TURNS 10!

A beautiful Spring day saw a gathering of volunteers, friends and the co-ordinator of the Barb Martin Bush Bank on Saturday 6 September to celebrate the 10th birthday of this wonderful asset to Phillip Island. KCC ranger Ash Reid spoke about the formation of the bush bank when Landcare officer Bessie Hussey met with Ash on site and first suggested the idea of a bush bank for Phillip Island. With funding from various sources, the site was leveled, a shed appeared, and over the years that shed has come to house refrigeration for seeds collected locally by volunteers, and various equipment. Hot houses have appeared, along with benches for propagation and further benches for displaying the plants ready for collection or sale. Watering systems, tanks and possum-proof fencing are also necessary items gradually added over the years. The BMBB has been blessed with several dedicated co-ordinators in Stephen Curwood, Bec Jack and now Jenny Toy, who with partner David did the preparation for Saturday's celebration. Anne Davie also spoke, congratulating all the volunteers who have been involved from the local community, around Australia, and even from overseas. Over 400,000 plants have been grown and distributed throughout Phillip Island as a result of the BMBB, which is an enormous achievement and has helped to transform the island through contributions to Landcare plantings (including the Wildlife Corridor), Coast Action plantings, new housing estates and tourist developments, and, of course, the many individuals who simply want tough, attractive plants that don't need much water! Congratulations to all involved in BMBB. Barb would be proud of you all!!

Christine Grayden

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MESSAGE FROM THE TREASURER

While the success of the objectors at VCAT against the proposed Linfox development at Pyramid Rock was certainly cause for celebration, PICS's role was to provide two expert witnesses, which of course came at a cost. Our Public Fund went down from \$8,250 to \$1,046, whilst the Fighting Fund, sponsored by the Phillip Island and San Remo Advertiser, which raised \$3,225, now contains \$307. We have little doubt that Linfox will put in a further application which PICS may have to object to involving more costs at

VCAT. Thanks to donors this year, our Public Fund balance is now over \$3,000. However, we will obviously need much more if we are to present another strong case in VCAT again. Please consider sending a donation to our Public Fund, either now or with your membership subscription which will fall due in January. Separate subscription notices will be sent to all members in December.

With thanks,

Christine Grayden, Treasurer

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SEASONAL WALK FOR WINTER - PENGUIN RESERVE

Peter Dann, Research Manager for Phillip Island Nature Park, led our winter seasonal walk for 10 participants. We started with an inspection of the new Research, Education and Environment complex set among mature coast Banksias.

Designed with sustainability in mind, the complex consists of three separate buildings joined by raised walkways, a large rainwater tank supplying all the required water and a septic tank system incorporating a reed bed and irrigated mound. It also occupies the territory of a pair of Cape Barren Geese, which, unusually, were nesting on top of a small tree. The male habitually attacked its reflection in the glass doors of the education centre, making a mess on the walkway. A couple of posters stuck to the inside of the door removed the reflection, and the battle ceased!

Peter conducted us on a tour of the Research building which includes office space for research staff, post graduate students and visiting overseas scientists; a spacious library; and a small laboratory. We were shown the small transmitters that are attached to the backs of penguins for the satellite tracking project, funded by the Penguin Foundation, NSW National Parks Foundation and the Dept of Sustainability and Environment. Each transmitter costs \$2500 and stays on the penguin for only a couple of weeks. Similar transmitters and a device for recording depth are also used to track seals. Microchip transponders are also used to identify penguins, replacing the metal clips on flippers. The tiny transponders are injected just under the skin of the penguin.

Results from the tracking program were shown to us as computer-generated maps. They indicate how important Port Phillip Bay is as a winter feeding ground for penguins which feed there mostly on anchovies. By contrast, Western Port bay is not much used for feeding. Neither do the penguins spend much time in the area of the proposed desalination plant. In summer, while feeding chicks, penguins feed locally.

The laboratory is set up for the sorting of samples taken during research (e.g. stomach contents, seal faeces) and for microscopic analysis. Some blood analysis and autopsies are also conducted here.

Our walk then continued to the Penguin Parade itself. On the way we noted the Volunteer Centre, built from the \$200,000 compensation paid by those responsible for an oil spill that polluted beaches at Cape Woolamai several years ago. A bird/animal hospital is also planned.

Adjacent to the Penguin Parade Visitors' Centre we noticed nesting boxes with small round covers and wires protruding. Peter informed us that they were set up with cameras and infrared lighting to allow filming of penguin behaviour as part of a joint ABC and National Geographic project.

Members of the Penguin Study Group were busy within the Parade rookery area weighing and sexing penguins and using an electronic reading device to detect transponders on the backs of penguins and hence identifying them. It was in fact the fortieth birthday of this group, which has continued to monitor penguins since 1968, a most notable achievement of dedication.

Recent management activities within the Parade area have included spraying to remove substantial areas of kikuyu. then replanting with succulents such as bower spinach and

Seaberry saltbush. Coast tea tree must also be controlled to prevent it taking over the area, as its dense canopy discourages penguins from digging burrows or moving about.

At the beach viewing area, Peter pointed out a small weighbridge set across a well-used penguin trail. Penguins pass through this device in single file, are identified and their weight recorded. About 80 to 100 penguins a night can be monitored in this way, and 10 years of data have been collected. At present the aim is to check whether channel-deepening in Port Phillip Bay is having any impact on penguin feeding. So far, no overall decline in body weights has been detected.

Apart from the normal viewing of the nightly Penguin Parade, there are several other options for viewing experiences that visitors can pay for. We were taken to the *Penguin Plus* area; a small viewing platform close to the edge of the beach and at the mouth of Whale's Head Creek. Small numbers of visitors can also be taken to Shelly Beach where they are given night-vision goggles to watch the birds come ashore.

Other birds, not just penguins, were in evidence around the Penguin Reserve. On our return walk we encountered a pair of Cape Barren Geese with two goslings, and a few of the 47 Eastern Swamp hens that inhabit the area at present. Peter also told us of two pairs of swamp harriers breeding in the Reserve (one pair of which we saw) and of the ambitious project, just starting, aimed at counting all the sea birds along the Victorian coast. This project is funded by the PINP and Toyota, and we look forward to hearing of the results.

We all thanked Peter Dann for a most informative and enjoyable walk.

John Eddy

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Minutes of General Meeting held July 5, 2008

1. Welcome. The President, M. Hancock, opened the meeting at 8.10 pm, welcoming everyone, in particular the guest speaker Angelo D'Costa, Development Services Manager of Council's Planning Department

<http://www.basscoast.vic.gov.au/content/content.asp?cnid=3682>

2. Attendance and apologies. as per attendance book.

3. The guest speaker, Angelo D'Costa, talked mainly about Amendment C85 <http://www.basscoast.vic.gov.au/content/content.asp?cid=486&ctid=1&cnid=2882> to implement the recommendation of the Bass Coast Planning Scheme Review which was adopted by Council on 16 April 2008. The amendment involves a new version of Council's Local Planning Policy Framework (including the Municipal Strategic Statement). The new version incorporates significant changes to the existing Local Planning Policy Framework. Both this and the Cowes-Silverleaves-Ventnor-Wimbledon Heights Structure Plan <http://www.basscoast.vic.gov.au/content/content.asp?cid=368&ctid=1&cnid=2970> are expected to be placed on public exhibition in the next month or two. Workshops will be held with the community to discuss Amendment C85. Council staff will be available to discuss any aspects of the Planning Scheme Review and the amendment at Cowes on Friday 18 July 2008 between 6.00 p.m. and 8.00 p.m. in Meeting Room 1 at the Cowes Cultural Centre. Council has requested the Minister for Planning to pre-appoint an independent Panel for this amendment, to consider any submissions. Dates have already been set for this Panel. The Directions Hearing, to determine the format and timetable for the Panel Hearing, will be held in the week of 13 October 2008. The actual Panel Hearing will be held in the week of 17 November 2008.

4. Vote of thanks was given by J. Eddy and applauded by those present.

5. Minutes of the previous General Meeting, 29 March 2008, as circulated in the Newsletter, accepted with the amendment that P. Manning was an apology. *Moved:* J. Eddy, *seconded:* C. Grayden, *carried.*

6. Business Arising. To General Business.

7. Correspondence.

In: Letter of resignation from M. and G. Johnson.

It was resolved that a letter be sent expressing sincere regret at their resignation from the Committee, along with an expression of the members' appreciation of their extraordinary contribution to PICS over two decades, in particular their recent work with the Environment Defenders Office which resulted in such a positive outcome for the Society. *Moved*, P. Manning, *seconded*, B. Howe, *carried*.

Changes to Overlay <http://www.basscoast.vic.gov.au/content/content.asp?cnid=3835>

Out: Objection to music festival at race track
<http://www.phillipislandcircuit.com.au/index.php>

To the Shire regarding its policy on rezoning for residential land.

Various thank you letters following the successful 40th anniversary celebrations.

Moved: P. Manning, *seconded*: J. Eddy, *carried*.

8. Treasurer's Report.

General A/c # 3835 10022884

Opening Balance, 1.4.08: \$8,078.98

Plus Income:

- Envirofund Red Rocks grant: 15,725.00
- Membership subs: 240.00
- Donations: 95.00
- Book sales: 2,210.00
- Cash Float: 110.00
- Raffle: 288.00
- GST: 579.00
- Rime of Ancient Mariner: 82.90
- Interest: 33.68

Total Income: 19,363.58

Less Expenditure:

Reimbursement C Grayden

- Photocopy paper: 19.95
- M. Quigley- PICS HIS: 225.00
- PICS HIS expenses: 233.65
- Book launch/40th expenses: 253.16

Cash float: 110.00

Photocopying for displays: 89.07

Room hire: 39.60

Transfer GST to Public Fund: 579.00

PI & SR Advertiser, GM: 32.14

New Artworx book/invite printing: 2,667.50

Reimburse Gillian Collins postage: 55.00

Aus Post nltr postage: 42.00

ISBN PICS History book: 80.50

Chris Larsen - maps: 400.00

M Smith, cake decoration: 80.00

Total Expenditure: 4,906.57

Closing Balance, 30.6.08: 22,535.99

Encumbered Funds:

PICS History: 962.60
Red Rocks Coast Action: 15,725.00
Children's Environment Mornings: 107.40
5 Ways: 80.00
VCAT: 300.00
Fighting Fund: 307.90

BCSC Pics History grant: 00.00

Total encumbered funds: 17,482.90

Available Funds: 5,053.09

Public Fund A/c # 3835 1008 9114

Opening balance as at 1.4.08: 1,046.10

Plus Income

- Donations: 215.00
- GST: 579.00

Estimated Balance (no statement): 1,840.10

Plus interest ??

The balance remaining in the PICS History Encumbered Fund may be transferred to the Public Fund after consultation with K. Pound.

Moved: C. Grayden, seconded: G. Cleeland, carried.

9. General Business.

1. C85. A workshop will be held in Cowes on Friday 18th July between 6pm and 8pm at the Cowes Cultural Centre, Meeting Room 1. Any person who may be affected by the amendment may make a submission to the planning authority. Written submissions must be sent to: Strategic Planner, Bass Coast Shire Council, PO Box 118, Wonthaggi 3995. Submissions close on Friday 1 August 2008.

2. Desalination Policy. PICS objects to the proposed desalination plant at Williamsons Beach near Kilcunda on the grounds of cost, energy requirement, potential impact on marine life, the adverse impact of both the plant and the power lines on the landscape for residents and tourists, the site's propensity to flood, the disposal of sludge, the haste with which desalination was chosen over other options which have not been fully explored. It was proposed that a letter be sent to The Honourable Timothy (Tim) James Holding, Minister for Water timothy.holding@parliament.vic.gov.au Level 26, 121 Exhibition Street, Melbourne 3000 with a copy to Your Water Your Say

<http://www.yourwateryoursay.org/> at info@yourwateryoursay.org and also to M. Schinkel and P. Hunt.

Moved: J. Eddy, *seconded:* P. Manning, *carried*

3. Red Rocks. Funding received and work is underway.

4. Music festival at the racetrack. Objection submitted.

5. B. Thompson referred to Item 10.5 from the Minutes of the previous General Meeting concerning PINP's <http://www.penguins.org.au/> reported \$22m expansion plans. No further information was available.

6. The book 'Wings over Western Port' has been added to PICS library. Further copies can be purchased (\$10 for members or \$15 for non-members plus p&p) via BOCAWeb@birdobservers.org.au

7. B. Thompson mentioned that the book 'Climate Code Red : the case for emergency action' by Philip Sutton and David Spratt, Scribe Publications, 2008, was to be launched by the Governor of Victoria, Professor David de Kretser, A.C. at Queen's Hall, Parliament House, Spring Street, East Melbourne on Thursday 17th July at 4.30 for 5.00 pm. It was *moved:* J. Eddy, *seconded:* B. Howe, that PICS purchase 3 copies @ \$17 each. *Carried.*

8. J. Eddy mentioned the Garnaut report http://www.garnautreview.org.au/domino/Web_Notes/Garnaut/garnautweb.nsf A Draft Report was released on 4 July 2008, and the Final Report is due by 30 September 2008. A Supplementary Draft Report will also be released in late August 2008. The Western Port Greenhouse Alliance <http://www.wpga.org.au/> has also recently released 'People, Property and Place: Impacts of Climate Change on Human Settlements in the Western Port Region: an Integrated Assessment'. The full report is available here <http://www.wpga.org.au/ppp.asp>

10. Next Working Bee: Sunday 27th July 2008, 10 am. Planting at Red Rocks.

Next General Meeting: Saturday 27th September 2008, 8.00 pm, Heritage Centre Meeting Room, Cowes.

Next Committee Meeting Monday 21st July 10am, St Philip's Church Hall.

11. The meeting closed at 10.30 pm.

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An Island Worth Conserving: A History of the Phillip Island Conservation Society 1968-2008

If you don't have your copy of the official PICS history yet, you can order it and have it posted to you. Send \$20 per book + \$5 per 1-2 copies postage to The Treasurer, PO Box 548, COWES, 3922. Cheques and money orders to be made payable to Phillip Island Conservation Society Inc. Include your name and address. You can use the [online form](#) for your order. Thanks!

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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

President: Margaret Hancock ph/fax 5952 2557

Newsletter editors: Christine Grayden & John Eddy ph 5956 8501; Email:
cgrayden@waterfront.net.au

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