

**“The Penguin”
Newsletter**
Third Quarter: September 2013



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Dates for Your Diary 2013

Sun 29th September Red Rocks Coast Care working bee. Follow-up manual control of Blue Periwinkle. Meet at RR car park 10 a.m. Refreshments to follow.

NOTE CHANGE OF DATE! Sat 5 October: General Meeting. 7.30 p.m., Heritage Centre Meeting Room, 89 Thompson Ave Cowes. Speaker: PINP ranger Peter Cleary will speak about his ranger experiences in various places. Supper to follow.

Sun 17th Nov Red Rocks Coast Care working bee. As for 29th Sep.

Sat 11th January 2014: “Animals of Oz” with Dr of Zoology, Lee. Two sessions: 10-10.50; 11-11.50. Free. Funded by Bass Coast Shire. Australian animals, birds and reptiles in a controlled, educational environment.
Sat 11 January 2014: AGM: 6.30 p.m. bring and share meal. 7.30 p.m. meeting. Annual reports; election of office bearers.

Enquiries for all events: Christine Grayden, ph 5956 8501 m 0400 900 612 e: cgrayden@waterfront.net.au

Barb Martin Bush Bank: Sales and volunteers – every Wednesday + 1st Saturday of each month 10 – 1. Phone Anne Davie ph 5956 8216

Friends of Koalas (FOK) Habitat Days: First Sat of every month at 10 a.m. **Koala Count** at the Koala Conservation Centre, second Tuesday of every month at 10 a.m. Contact Patsy Hunt ph 5952 2407

Friends of Churchill Island (FOCIS): email: webmaster@friendsofchurchillisland.org.au

Groundswell Bass Coast Climate Change action group: Neil Rankine 5672 1185 neilnola@netspace.net.au

Bird Life Bass Coast: Penny Manning, convenor, donpenma@waterfront.net.au ph 5956 7586

GENERAL MEETING: Change of date: SAT 5 OCT, 2013
HERITAGE CENTRE MEETING ROOM, COWES
Speaker: Peter Cleary, PINP Ranger, on being a ranger in various areas
7.30 p.m. All are welcome! Supper to follow.

PICS COMMITTEE 2013

President: Anne Davie (media contact 5956 8216) e: bimbadeen@nex.net.au

Vice President: Pauline Taylor ph 5952 5485

Secretary: Christine Grayden, ph 5956 8501 e: cgrayden@waterfront.net.au

Minutes Secretary: Gillian Collins

Treasurer: Danielle Angel

Committee: Terry Nott, Steven Angel, Penny Manning (Chair of c/ee and sub c/ee meetings), Margaret Hancock, Jane Westworth.

C/ee meets at 10.30 a.m. on 4th Sat of each month at Community Room, Parish Hall Cowes.

Letter to Members

Dear Members,

On 31st July a Planning Panels Victoria hearing took place over 3 days at Cowes on the C132 amendment. P.I.C.S. was given a 2hr slot to give our submission. Anne, Margaret, Bob, Christine & Terry spoke knowledgeably on behalf of P.I.C.S. highlighting the different issues & impacts of the proposed rezoning; we would like to thank all of them most sincerely. Other members of P.I.C.S. also gave their personal submissions such as Ray Astbury who presented a submission based on climate change; we thank everyone who submitted & also those who came along in support of P.I.C.S. A decision is expected any day now which will first go to Council who will then let everyone know the result.

P.I.C.S. hosted a Meet the Candidates forum on the 30th August for the Federal Election. There were 7 of the 10 Candidates in attendance with a very good audience turnout. There was vigorous & interesting debate on a large raft of questions which continued into refreshment time. An excellent meeting!



We would like to thank the Bass Coast Shire for granting us funding under the Community Grants program which has enabled us to buy 20 fluoro vests for use by volunteers when taking part in working bees.

We recently held a planting day at Saltwater Creek, 18 P.I.C.S. members & community people planted 660 trees in a morning – fantastic work. A special mention must be made of Dave Martin from the BCS who gave up a day of his weekend to co-ordinate & help with the planting, thank you.

Saturday 14th September P.I.C.S. hosted the yearly Get Together for Environmental groups in the Bass Coast region at the Koala Conservation Centre on Phillip Island. We had approximately 20 people who, on a beautiful sunny afternoon enjoyed a guided tour of the KCC & the Barb Martin Bush Bank, after which we had a scrumptious afternoon tea followed by an informative presentation by all the different groups represented there. P.I.C.S. would like to thank the Bass Coast Shire for providing the afternoon tea & also the Phillip Island Nature Parks for providing the venue & access to the KCC for no charge.

Website

Last but certainly not least P.I.C.S. would like to thank Steve so much for all his work on producing our great website.

Pauline Taylor, Vice President

(President Anne Davie is away in Italy!)

PLANNING UPDATE

“SCENIC ISLE ESTATE” – better known to most of us as “Chinamen’s” – may well have been the catalyst which led to the establishment of PICS in 1968. The fight against the obviously inappropriate subdivision was led by MURRAY HILGENDORF and AILSA SWAN, and culminated in a successful appeal to the Town & Country Planning Board – the forerunner of VCAT. It’s very exciting that, at last, a proper environmental development plan is underway for Scenic Isle and that the buy-back is proceeding apace. We will be able to display and discuss these plans at the General Meeting on October 5th. Ideas are urgently needed for a new name for this area, obviously both “Scenic Isle” and “Chinamen’s” are inappropriate, so please do some creative thinking and bring your suggestions to the meeting.

BLUE GUM ALLEY: Another long-term planning issue is the closure of Blue Gum Alley to all but Emergency Vehicles. The Bass Coast Shire Council, in 2001, passed a motion to do this – and since then nothing positive has been done to restrict unauthorized vehicles. Some of you may remember all the fuss

when the Church St extension running through to Red Rocks became a Fire Access Track. Nowadays nobody would even think of opening the area to non-emergency vehicles. And Blue Gum Alley, in its own way, is just as valuable to the environment. We are awaiting a response from the Shire to a letter about this issue.

C132. The Golf Club extension Lechte Housing Development proposal.

It was heartening to see so many people at the three day Hearing conducted by Planning Panels Victoria at Cowes. Anne Davie, Bob Baird, Christine Grayden, Terry Nott and I shared in presenting the PICS submission. We also shared in the cross-examination of the Expert Witnesses, which is a very important opportunity given to all submitters. The Panels' decision should be known very shortly, so that will be another item for the General Meeting.

Margaret Hancock

New research finds Hastings port expansion plan an oil spill disaster in the making

Media release from Victorian National Parks Association (VNPA) and Western Port and Peninsula Protection Council (WPPC) Monday 2 September 2013

Massive development plans for Victoria's Westernport Bay will expose the area's globally significant marine and coastal wetlands to potentially huge damage from oil spills, new research shows. The findings have sparked calls for the Federal Government to launch an immediate environmental assessment of the Victorian Government's port expansion plans under national conservation laws.

"The new research found that even relatively small amounts of oil spilled from shipping traffic in Westernport could reach local shorelines within minutes and high conservation areas within less than six hours," Victorian National Parks Association spokesman Simon Branigan said today.

"We aren't talking about oil tankers, but rather heavy fuel oil and diesel spills from container ships and port support vessels."

The research modelled six credible oil spill scenarios based on 27 previous oil spill accidents across Australia since 1970. Computer modelling tracked the spills over a two-week period from two locations within Westernport Bay.

"The modelling shows Phillip Island Nature Park is vulnerable to oil spill contamination, and French Island Marine National Park is also at high risk of exposure. It also highlighted the fact that once oil is in the water, it will be hard to stop.

"Both these parks and many other parts of the bay are home to key roosting, feeding and breeding habitats for waterbirds including annual migrants that breed in Russia, China, Japan and Alaska, spending the summer months feeding in the bay," Mr Branigan said.

The report was commissioned in response to the Victorian Government's proposal to expand the Port of Hastings into an international container port, increasing shipping traffic from under 100 ships a year to more than 3000. Such an increase in shipping is likely to heighten the risk of oil spill.

All of Westernport Bay is listed under the international Ramsar Convention. It is home to 32 species of migratory birds protected by international agreements, making its waters and shorelines subject to national environmental laws.

"Westernport Bay is one of Victoria's richest marine and coastal environments, and we call for the port expansion plans to have the highest level assessment available under national laws as a matter of urgency," said Mr Branigan.

The Victorian National Parks Association and the Westernport and Peninsula Protection Council are calling on federal Labor and the Coalition to commit to a comprehensive and independent assessment using the full force of national environmental laws before any further work or money is spent on expanding the port.

"Westernport is Victoria's marine playground, a unique tidal bay and wetland of international importance with remarkable environmental and recreational values right on the doorstep of Melbourne," said Westernport and Peninsula Protection Council spokesperson Chris Chandler.

"We are very concerned that the State Government's plans to turn Westernport into an international container port will expose the bay to a spill disaster, threatening the area's rich biodiversity including its beautiful beaches, seagrass meadows, native wildlife such as Little Penguins and Black Swan, as well as highly prized recreational fishing species King George Whiting and Snapper."

Both groups fear the port expansion will require major dredging, the clearing of mangroves to fill in parts of the bay, and road and rail transport corridors through Gippsland, the Mornington Peninsula and suburban Melbourne.

"Expanding the Port of Hastings poses unacceptable danger to Westernport's unique environmental, social and recreational values," Mr Branigan said. "Any proper assessment must consider environmental impacts, all risks and alternative port locations with links to national transport planning."

The research was commissioned by the Victorian National Parks Association with the Westernport and Peninsula Protection Council, a local community group that has been campaigning against threatened port expansion for 42 years.

On a related issue...

Development and commercialisation of magnetic particle technology for cleaning oiled wildlife – from PINP Research report:

The magnetic particle technology for cleaning oiled wildlife has been developed further during the year in conjunction with our partners at Victoria University. Two papers have been published: one modelling the process of magnetic particle collection and the other on the 'quick clean' process for wildlife. Further testing on the magnetic technique on the behaviour and short-term navigation of penguins will be tested in the coming year. We are currently applying for a commercialisation grant from the Federal Government to produce operational field units that can be tested on wildlife at an oil spill.



Training DEPI officers, PINP staff and volunteers for oiled wildlife response – also from PINP Research report

During the past 12 months, PINP research and environment teams have trained 60 people including officers from Department of Environment and Primary Industry (DEPI), PINP staff and volunteers in the capture and rehabilitation of oiled seabirds. This training is part of our commitment under the memorandum of understanding with DEPI to assist in the management of oiled wildlife response in Victoria. The course was a combination of lectures and practical exercises.

RED ROCKS COAST CARE

A very successful planting day was held by RRCC in July with 300 plants put in by an efficient and enthusiastic band of 12 volunteers. We now hope for good rain over spring, and the occasional summer downpour, to ensure the plants' survival. Our success rate from last year's planting was much diminished by the long dry late spring-summer period. We are consequently investigating alternative methods of planting to improve survival rates.

Our spraying program, started last year, to control Blue Periwinkle has proved to be most successful, with just sporadic regrowth in a few places. However, it is essential that this regrowth is efficiently destroyed if long-term eradication of this invasive weed is to be achieved. We hope we can manage this with manual methods at our next working bee on 29th September.

Thanks to a \$500 allocation from Cr Kimberley Brown's Ward Discretionary Fund for a project at Red Rocks, we have purchased special wire netting and stakes for setting up substantial guards for tree seedlings that wallabies feed on. It has become impossible to establish species like Sweet Bursaria without such guards which need to be over one metre in height and well-secured. Construction and placement of the guards will be done by RRCC volunteers during October.

Christine and I were pleased to represent PICS and Red Rocks Coast Care in particular at the 2013 Victorian Coastal Council awards on 11th September. This followed my nomination by the Society for an Outstanding Individual Achievement award. That was not successful, but we enjoyed hearing about many outstanding projects around Victoria's coastline, and meeting many other people dedicated to looking after this precious natural resource. We shared the excitement of yet another win for PINP (completion of Summerlands restoration), and of the Bunurong Education Centre included as a finalist in the Education Category, and South Gippsland Conservation Society's Screw Creek reserve project as a finalist in their category.

John Eddy.

Work continues on Bayview Park revegetation project. The final planting for 2013 was in early September.

PHOTO: Maurice Schinkel



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Have you been on the PICS facebook page yet? Over 240 people a week visit to catch up with Phillip Island environment news, and all the PICS action, including Red Rocks Coast Care photos and information. Find us at <http://www.facebook.com/picsvictoria>

New PICS Website!

Our old website, set up by Diane Baird, has served us well for many years, but the time had arrived for a complete update. Into the breach stepped c/ee member Steve Angel, for whom setting up the new website has been a steep learning curve! The new website is still in the building process, though it is online now. The new website address is: picsvictoria.org.au Thanks for all your work on this Steve!

PHILLIP ISLAND CONSERVATION SOCIETY
Minutes of the General Meeting held Saturday 6th July 2013
Heritage Centre Meeting room, Cowes, 7.35 p.m.

1. Present: as per attendance book
2. Apologies: as per attendance book
3. The meeting was preceded by a Power Point talk given by Ewan Cameron, president of Phillip Island Landcare. Landcare was launched in 1985 by then Victorian Premier, Joan Kirner. There are now 6000 Landcare and Coastcare groups nationally, and Landcare has been extended to 20 other countries. Phillip Island Landcare was formed as a trial in 1987. The Bass Coast Landcare Network was formed in 2004 and includes 10 groups over 6 catchments with over 1000 members.

The Phillip Island Landcare group's vision is "To encourage sustainable land use, business practices and lifestyles, and promote the conservation and restoration of native biodiversity on Phillip Island and throughout Victoria.

"We seek to foster a healthy informed community working together to sustain a resilient, productive and biodiverse landscape on Phillip Island and beyond."

In the last 25 years, PILG has planted around 350,000 indigenous plants; retired 150 ha of land to remnants and revegetation; 400 ha salt affected land restored to production and environment; controlled over 2000 ha of priority pest plants and animals. PILG also works with the Phillip Island Nature Parks on fox, feral cat and rabbit control, runs practical sustainability seminars and partners with private enterprise and government. Ewan was thanked by Anne with the gift of a bottle of local wine, and by the audience with acclamation.

4. Minutes of the previous meeting held Sat 6th April 2013. Margaret Hancock/Pauline Taylor. *Carried.*

5. Matters arising:

- a) Fires on Beaches: Anne had asked the question at a Council meeting and it had been taken on notice. However, she has received no reply. There had been no community debriefing about New Year's Eve this year, but the fires are happening at other times too.
- b) illegal paling fences at Shearwater Estate. The last regular get-together between PICS and a BCSC member did not include Rebecca Mouy from Planning. Dianna Whittington was sent instead, and had no understanding of the issues. It was a disappointing meeting.
- c) Hike in VCAT fees. Christine tabled a document outlining the new increased fees.
- d) All the pine trees on the foreshore reserve adjacent to Woolamai House subdivision have now been removed.
- e) BCSC community grant has been received for \$450 for us to have 20 florescent vests printed for use at working bees.
- f) Weed spraying at Red Rocks. Follow-up spray has been applied and now there is only sparse, restricted weed regrowth left.
- g) Sustainable Housing Forum. Anne thanked Terry for organising the forum and suggested that the main speaker Jane Toner from Sustainable Built Environments could be a speaker at a future general meeting.

6. Correspondence:

a) Inwards:

June Botten, member, with change of address.

From Dept of State Development, Business and Innovation – change of name

Greg Hunt re support for marine parks, but need more consultation

Greg Hunt re private development in Victoria's National Parks – has approached the minister on our behalf.

Dept of Premier and Cabinet – our letter on above as been referred on

BCSC Felicity Sist, Infrastructure Director, re: Dunsmore Rd Recycling Centre. We had written with concerns about Blue Gum Alley, which are not addressed in her letter. Diana Whittington to follow up.

Dept of Justice – standard reply to our detailed letter re VCAT fees

Jenny Hearn, member, re Swanpool Environmental Film Festival

Nepean Conservation News

Smiths Beachcomber Association newsletter Winter, 2013

FOCIS newsletter, Winter 2013

Planning Panels Victoria re preparations for panel hearing re C132, Waterville. PICS will appear.

b) Outwards:

To BCSC World Environment Day partner activity statement, returned with information about our stand, which will be on bush tucker

To BCSC PICS Comments on Rural Land Use Strategy Directions Paper

To Denis Naphine, Ryan Smith and Ken Smith on PICS concerns re private development in Victoria's National Parks Submission to Victorian Coastal Awards, nominating John Eddy, Red Rocks Coast Care Co-ordinator, for Outstanding Individual Achievement award

Correspondence moved Terry Nott/Jane Westworth. *Carried.*

7. Treasurer's Report:

The report had been emailed by Dani Angel, Treasurer, and was presented by Christine Grayden.

Need to change Boyview Park to Bayview Park

Dani Angel/Terry Nott *Carried.*

John Eddy raised the issue of Bayview Park, which is a project of weed removal and revegetation initiated by PICS member Sue Saliba, under the supervision of BCSC Parks and Gardens.

"That PICS acknowledges the receipt of money allocated from Cr Kimberley Brown's discretionary fund earmarked for the revegetation of Bayview Park, Red Rocks (\$500) and will place the money into encumbered funds for use at Bayview Park, while acknowledging that this is not an official PICS project, but one undertaken independently by a group of PICS members." John Eddy/Margaret Hancock *Carried*

Members suggested that BCSC's Danny Luna be contacted to sort out the issue of public liability insurance for the PICS members working on this project. John Eddy to follow up.

8. General Business:

C132: Terry Nott, Margaret Hancock, Anne Davie, Bob Baird, Christine Grayden and Jane Westworth are to meet on Sunday 2 p.m. to discuss PICS submission to Planning Panels Victoria.

BCS Environment Groups Get Together will be held on Sat Sep 7, 2-5 p.m., Chisholm room, KCC. Christine is the contact ph 5956 8501.

Meet the Candidates: Pauline Taylor/Margaret Hancock "That we hold a Meet the Candidates Forum for the forthcoming federal elections." *Carried.*

RRCC working bee, tomorrow, 10 a.m., big planting day. North facing areas are dry as they seem to be in a bit of a rain shadow.

Scenic Estate (Chinamen's) Margaret Hancock spoke about how Ailsa Swan and Murray Hilgendorf had worked hard to have the estate stopped through the Town and Country Planning Association. June Morrish, who had a house opposite, kept bird records for Scenic Estate for 60+ years and had been guide for a PICS walk through the area in 1990s. Margaret showed plans BCSC has for walking track through the estate and suggested that PICS could fund some seats.

Margaret also reported that she had attended Cr Phil Wright's community meeting. Mary Whelan was chairperson. It was a successful event. Some Ventnor residents were there and showed their idea of an alternative walking track at Saltwater Creek, to follow the sewer easement on north side of the creek. The community meeting is to held on the first Monday of every month.

Christine reported that she had been to a gathering of reps from local community groups at the PI RSL to hear about their new grants policy, which now includes community as well as welfare grants.

Meeting closed 9.20 p.m.

Next General Meeting: Saturday 6th July, 7.30 p.m., Heritage Centre Meeting Room.

The Penguin Newsletter

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PICS Inc.

PO Box 548

COWES, 3922

Bass Coast Shire Environment Groups Get Together



PICS hosted this year's get together on Saturday 14 September at the Chisholm Room of the Koala Conservation Centre, made available for free by PINP, who also did a special on the nice catering for us. Expenses for the day were funded by Bass Coast Shire, who was represented by Deputy Mayor Cr Neil Rankine. PICS VP Pauline Taylor welcomed the 20 or so delegates, followed by a walk through the KCC – our tour guide was Patsy Hunt, President of Friends of Koalas - and a tour of the Barb Martin Bush Bank with co-ordinator Jenny Toy. Back at the Chisholm Centre, delegates enjoyed afternoon tea and lots of chatting and networking, then reports were given by representatives of the various groups.

Groups represented on the day were PICS, Bird Life Bass Coast – Education Officer, Elizabeth Shaw, who said she is available to do talks or lead walks. Phillip Island Landcare – Mike Cleeland, who invited us to a Treeplanting event next day; Wonthaggi Urban Landcare, Liz Glynn – who showed a short video of a planting day at Tank Hill, which showed us how useful a record video can be. Jessica Harrison represented the harvest centre in Wonthaggi, where any produce left over goes to the Anglican Church which provides free meals on Monday nights.

Jessica also represented Lock the Gates, and told us that an announcement to lift the ban on Coal Seam Gas exploration was due soon. Harmers Haven and near Inverloch would be affected. Patsy Hunt spoke about Friends of Koalas activities and the perilous status of koalas throughout Australia. Dave Sutton spoke for South Gippsland Conservation Society, which was a finalist in two sections for the recent Coastal awards – for their education program and Screw Creek reserve. John Wright spoke about Ventnor Coast Care and how linking with a Kitty Miller Bay resident and PINP had resulted in an \$8000 grant to remove weeds and improve shearwater habitat. We also learnt about Tenby Point and the issues they have there from Jean Coffey, and the reports finished with Anwyn Martin reporting on activities along the 4 km long Corinella foreshore reserve. A most enjoyable and worthwhile afternoon!