

First Quarter: March 2016

Dates for Your Diary 2016

Enquiries John Eddy 5956 8501.

Red Rocks Coastcare (starting at 10 a.m. from the carpark)

Sunday 3rd April: site maintenance and weed control

Sunday 5th June: planting

Sunday 3rd July: planting

Sunday 25th Sep: angled onion control and rubbish clean up

Sunday 20th Nov: Spurgebusters at Justice Rd (sea spurge seedling control)

Saltwater Creek Coastcare (starting at 10 a.m., but will start from various locations. You will be advised closer to the time)

Sunday 8th May

Sunday 19th June: planting

Sunday 14th Aug

Sunday 23rd Oct (Warning: GP weekend)

Phillip Island Landcare (various locations) (not a PICS group. contact Mike Cleeland: mikeosaurus@yahoo.com.au)

Sat 11 June: planting

Sunday 19 July: planting

Saturday 13 Aug: planting

Friends of Scenic Estate Reserve (all working bees are from 10 a.m. to 12 noon, and start from the SER carpark)

Sunday 24 April: laying thatching in wetlands, weed control

Sunday 26 June: planting, especially around wetlands and bare areas

Sunday 11 Sep: grasslands maintenance

Sunday 11 Dec: possible mangrove planting in intertidal zone (TBC)

PICS General Meetings:

Saturday 2nd April: 7.30 p.m. at the Heritage Centre Meeting room, 89 Thompson Ave Cowes. "Swamp wallabies living in a landscape mosaic: Ecology and human perceptions".

Saturday 2nd July, 7.30 p.m. Heritage Centre meeting room, 89 Thompson Ave Cowes. Speaker: TBA.

Saturday 24th September, 7.30 p.m. Heritage Centre meeting room, 89 Thompson Ave Cowes. Speaker: TBA.

Saturday 7th January 2017 Annual General Meeting, St Philip's Parish Hall, cnr Thompson Ave and Church St Cowes.

Bring and share meal 6.30 p.m. Meeting 7.30 p.m. Annual reports; election of office bearers. (No speaker)

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

Sub-committees of PICS:

Red Rocks Coastcare/Friends of Scenic Estate Reserve: Co-ordinator is John Eddy, ph 5956 8501 e:

cgrayden@waterfront.net.au

Saltwater Creek Coastcare: Co-ordinator is Kevin Harris kevin@grating.com.au

Other groups:

Preserve Western Port Action Group (against the Port of Hastings): preservewesternport@gmail.com Official phone number is: 0456 612 852 Facebook: Preserve Western Port Action Group. Media contact: Jeff Nottle

nottle@bigpond.net.au Secretary: Kate 0409 692 425.

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: secretary@focis.org.au

Groundswell Bass Coast Climate Change action group: <http://groundswellbasscoast.com> Contact Ray Astbury: rugged@people.net.au phone 5952 1991.

Bird Life Bass Coast: Penny Manning, convener, penny@waterfront.net.au



PHILLIP ISLAND CONSERVATION SOCIETY INC

GENERAL MEETING

Saturday 2nd April, 2016, 7.30 p.m.

Speaker: Manuela Fischer: “Swamp wallabies living in a landscape mosaic: Ecology and human perceptions”.

Followed by reports and general business

Heritage Centre meeting room, 89 Thompson Ave Cowes.

PICS COMMITTEE 2016

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: **VACANT**

Committee: Steven Angel (webmaster), Margaret Hancock (planning), Penny Manning (Chair of c/ee and sub c/ee meetings) Terry Nott, Jeff Nottle, Lisa Schonberg. **ONE POSITION VACANT**

C/ee meets at 9.30 a.m. mostly on 4th Sat of each month at Community Emmaus Room, Parish Hall Cowes.

President's Letter to Members

The Society's AGM in January was well attended. As the Reports were presented during the evening, it was evident that PICS had had a very busy, important and successful 12 months. The Reports are in the Newsletter. The volunteers are incredibly dedicated and should be lauded for their commitment to the Island's environment and wildlife.

Unfortunately we were unable to have anyone volunteer to be Treasurer at the AGM. Please consider putting your hand up to do this important job! Contact our secretary Christine Grayden if you can help:

cgrayden@waterfront.net.au

The PICS new brochure has been well received and has resulted in an increase in membership, as we had hoped! Members have held 3 successful stalls in the Town Square and the new gazebo is a great asset. The days in the Square have enabled members the opportunity to talk to many people about the work of not only PICS but other environment groups on the Island. The fragility of the Island's ecosystem is talked about and the need for people to be mindful of this, as Climate Change impacts.

A very happy event took place on March 3rd when the Scenic Estate Conservation Reserve was officially opened by Hon. Lisa Neville MP. It was attended by Mayor Jordan Crugnale, Councillors, Friends of Scenic Estate Reserve and others. It was a beautiful morning and the views across to Churchill Island and Western Port were stunning. The Minister acknowledged the importance of and her gratitude to the Friends of Scenic Estate Reserve [FOSER]. What a great good news story!



At the Opening, the Minister was pleased to catch up with a former Minister of Conservation and Environment, Kay Setches, a friend and colleague. Hon Neville had visited the Penguin Parade the night before and just loved it. She indicated that she would like to meet with members of PICS committee, when she next visits the Island.

Photo shows Mayor Cr Jordan Crugnale, Matt Jackson PINP, Bradley Fauteux, Parks Vic, Harriet Shing, MLC East Victoria, Lisa Neville, Minister for Environment, Kay Setches, former minister for environment and PICS member.

Phillip Island is experiencing one of its driest periods ever and the conditions are putting stress on farmland, wildlife, plantings etc. It will be so good to hear the rain on the roof again.

Thanks again to Christine and John for the Newsletter. Many people comment on its excellent content and look forward to each edition. *Anne Davie*

PHILLIP ISLAND CONSERVATION SOCIETY INC
Annual General Meeting January 9th, 2016
St. John's Parish Hall, 7:45pm - 9:36pm

1. PRESENT: As per sign-in book

2. APOLOGIES: As per sign-in book

Anne Davie, President, was in the chair and welcomed the assembled members and guests.

MINUTES of the previous meeting Christine Grayden/Margaret Hancock. Carried.

Annual Reports appear elsewhere in this newsletter.

The Treasurer's report was presented by Christine Grayden in the absence of our Treasurer. She asked for any member who was interested in being our Treasurer to contact her.

Motion to accept the report was moved by Gillian Collins and Seconded by Carmen Bush and approved unanimously.

Gillian Collins put forward a motion to thank Gary Morgan for his work as Treasurer. Moved, Pauline Taylor, Seconded, Margaret Hancock, Approved Unanimously.

Anne Davie asked Council member Phil Wright to please conduct the election for new members of the Committee. He agreed, and declared all positions vacant.

The nominees that had been received were read. Only one member was nominated for each position:

President: Anne Davie

Vice-President: Pauline Taylor

Secretary: Christine Grayden

Minute Secretary: Gillian Collins

Treasurer: remains vacant

Ordinary member: Christine Grayden moved that we have 6 ordinary members. Pauline seconded, Approved Unanimously.

There were 5 written nominations

All approved unanimously.

President Davie thanked Councillor Wright for his assistance.

President Davie moved that the annual membership fee remain the same. Approved unanimously.

The Auditor John Batty, has agreed to remain in his position this year. It was moved that a letter of thanks be sent to him for his pro bono work.

Meeting declared closed at 9:35pm.

Submitted, Gillian Collins, Minute Secretary.

President Anne Davie gave her annual report:

- Member Jeff Nottle was declared "Bass Coast Citizen of the Year."
- In June, the Committee did great work, with the assistance of John Eddy, sorting old records that had been stored in former President Margaret Hancock's house.
- Our new gazebo has a presence in the Town Square today and Preserve Western Port, one of our auspiced groups, had their Gazebo on the beach.
- President Davie met with new MP Richard Wynne and passed out our three top priorities for Government.
- The new Scenic State Reserve was opened. PICS has expressed its deep gratitude to John Eddy for his tireless work as co-ordinator for the Friends group.
- The Blue Gum Reserve has progressed, thanks to Margaret Hancock.
- Committee Member Steve Angel has inspired us to move forward on a number of membership initiatives, including our new and beautiful brochure and our new membership card that gives members 25% off entry to PINP attractions.
- The Shearwater Festival was a great success.
- PICS thanks Ross Lloyd for his press cuttings archiving.
- And thanks to the whole Committee for another year's exceptional work!

Margaret Hancock gave her **planning issues** report:

- We had an exceptional year with no visits to VCAT!
- The Woolamai House Retarding Basin has taken a fair bit of our time, and it is not resolved yet.
- The Boys Home site in Newhaven has been sold. We do not know the identity of the new owner.
- The planned Forrest Caves Caravan Park has gone off the radar.
- The Golf Club proposals are still not resolved.
- The Cowes town boundary is still under discussion.
- The Wildlife Corridor fencing issue is still not resolved.
- The Blue Gum Reserve is still progressing, and Alison Oates has done invaluable work identifying plants and trees of importance in the area.
- The P.I. Airfield issue remains of concern. There are no reliable plans yet, and it would need a change to town boundaries for it to proceed.

Barb Martin Bush Bank report was given by Anne Davie

Friends of Koalas report was given by Patsy Hunt

Friends of Churchill Island Society report given by Pauline Taylor:

The Friends group had a number of speakers: In February, Anita Brady spoke about the Churchill Island Conservation Management Plan, which has been approved by the PINP Board. In May, Christine Grayden spoke of the "Extraordinary

Life of Harry Jenkins." In August, Patsy Hunt of Friends of the Koalas spoke of her group and the Koala Conservation Centre. In November, Dr. Duncan Sutherland spoke on the Churchill Island Eastern Barred Bandicoot population.



Events during the year included: FOCIS member Graham Paterson donated a facsimile of Grant's journal aboard the Lady Nelson. Pat Baird's book continues to sell steadily. There are about 1/2 of the original number left. We continue to supply the Register of Cultural Organisation with documentation for our tax-deductible status. Still waiting for an outcome. The PINP Open Day on Sunday, March 1 featured a display on Harry Jenkins and traditional children's activities. It was very popular. Rebecca Sanders, PhD candidate, successfully submitted her thesis on Churchill

Island and graduates soon. We continue to catalogue collection items onto the web site for Victorian collection. Twenty highly endangered Eastern Barred Bandicoots were introduced in spring. Only two lost so far.

PICS Life Member John Swan died this year. John was on the original Victorian Conservation Trust, which purchased Churchill Island for the people of Victoria in 1976.

Red Rocks Coast Care report was given by John Eddy:

During 2015, Red Rocks Coastcare working bees were again well-supported by our great band of volunteers. As always, we thank them, and Bass Coast Shire Council, particularly Environment Officer Dave Martin, for assisting us at all times. A special thanks also to Maurice Schinkel for taking photos for us to use on the PICS Facebook page and for press articles.

Our revegetation work continued to target areas previously cleared of Blue Periwinkle. Our June planting day resulted in about 400 plants going in over 9 different sites along the Fire Track. On that occasion, our 16 volunteers included state member for Bass, Brian Paynter, and Bass Coast mayor, Cr Kimberley Brown. Survival of the plants so far has been better than expected, given the very dry year. Poa grass has been especially successful, with more than 90% survival, Bursaria and Moonah (in guards) about 60%, but very low survival for Seaberry Saltbush due to tubestock affected by a root disease prior to planting.

The July planting day concentrated on planting 100 native pigface plants on bare dunes near Red Rocks Point. The plants were grown from cuttings by a year 8 class at Koo Wee Rup Secondary College and donated to Red Rocks Coastcare. There has been 90% survival so far.

Guards on Sweet Bursaria and Moonah continue to defy wallabies, and have proved to be successful enough to justify their cost and installation.



In weed control, our efforts in September were directed at Angled Onion, an insidious unpleasant weed that has been invading gradually along tracks. Our volunteers found hand-pulling of isolated plants was effective, but dense patches were left for contractors to spray. We continue to monitor and remove sea spurge seedlings from dunes at Red Rocks, but numbers are now very low in the main beach area.

Blue Periwinkle, which was the target of the 2012-13 spraying campaign, still requires regular monitoring and removal of the few seedlings re-emerging, but is dwindling markedly. Removal of thistles is ongoing, and

occurrence is spasmodic. Several blackberries adjacent to the carpark seem to have been successfully controlled by contractors.

Thankfully beach erosion was much milder this past winter. Council organised the building of a short extension to the beach end of the stairway near Penguin Rocks to provide safer beach access.

Some of our members also took part in the Coastcare Leadership workshop, organised by Gayle Seddon and Surf Beach/Sunderland Bay Coastcare. It ran over a weekend in May and proved to be a great success, with over 40 participants. Afternoon visits to numerous Coastcare sites around Phillip Island were a highlight, and included brief visits to Red Rocks and Saltwater Creek.

Our Spurgebusters program, aimed at eliminating sea spurge from the primary dunes west of Justice Rd, began the year with a trial of volunteers working individually at any time that suited them on removing plants, preventing any seedset. However, participants indicated they preferred to get together for working bees, which were therefore resumed at the site in November. During the year, we also received valuable assistance from Newhaven College students and the guests at Kate Whittaker's 50th birthday, who burnt off birthday cake calories by pulling up sea spurge. So far this summer, we have prevented any seedset by removing all flowering plants, in addition to the continual removal of seedlings. Gradually, the seed reserve in the dunes is being exhausted.

Alarmed by reports of significant marine plastic debris coming ashore on Phillip Island's south coast, we surveyed the main Red Rocks beach during our September working bee. Four transects along the beach, and sieving of sand at numerous sampling sites near high tide level failed to find any 'nurdles' or other small marine debris. We were delighted to report a pristine beach at that time.

Hooded Plover Watch, overseen by Phillip Island Nature Park's Jon Fallaw, occupies many hours for the dedicated team led by Sue Saliba. Our next working bee at Red Rocks is tomorrow, Sunday 10th Jan, starting at 10 am. All welcome. *John Eddy, RRCC coordinator, 4th Jan 2016*

Saltwater Creek Coast Care report was given by Kevin Harris:

Our Coastcare group has had a very successful year with the completion of the Coastal Banksia restoration project next to Saltwater Creek and ongoing weed control and rubbish pickup on other days.

This coming season we hope to continue with the good work and will commence further clean up and replanting on the west side of Saltwater Creek.

Several places have been identified as suitable for replanting and, weather permitting; we hope to start during this planting season.

This will be supported by Bass Coast Council and I have spoken with Dave Martin about these sites. He has visited them and would also like to clean up an area of dumped garden waste and tree cuttings and other waste behind a property. We have also identified some stands of Boxthorn on the West side of the Creek and will try to start work to remove them this season.

John Eddy, I and Alison Smith recently walked through our Coastal Banksia project area and it is pleasing to see how well the plants are surviving. We have had some losses but, with Johns help, plan to remedy this once conditions are suitable I would also like to give thanks for all the regular helpers that come to support our Coastcare group, just for the promise of some fruit cake and biscuits. Great effort by all. Our planned dates for this coming season are listed on p.1

Thanks to all that have helped Saltwater Creek Coastcare, Kevin Harris, Volunteer Co-ordinator

Sue Saliba gave a **Hooded Plover** report and showed beautiful slides to illustrate it. The birds are endangered and struggle to fledge chicks on Phillip Island's busy beaches, where dogs off leashes are a constant problem. Fat tired bikes are also a potential problem.

John Eddy reported on the development of the **Friends of the Scenic Estate Reserve** and illustrated it with slides. It is not often that we get to celebrate the creation of a new Conservation Reserve on Phillip Island, but 2015 gave us cause for just such a celebration. The new Scenic Estate Reserve, of 28 hectares, was opened to the public in July after many years of uncertainty about the future of this defunct inappropriate subdivision from 1960, known by locals as "Chinamans". In recent years, it suffered degradation by misuse from 4 Wheel drives, dirt bikes, illegal camping, and rubbish dumping. PICS, along with various other sections of the community, has long called for Council action. In 2012/3, Bass Coast Shire Council finally acted by closing access, commissioning a Landscape Design Masterplan, and clearing many truckloads of rubbish from the site. Development of infrastructure to create the Reserve was funded in part by a Regional Development Victoria grant backed up by Shire Council funds, and works undertaken in partnership with Phillip Island Nature Parks and Parks Victoria. This was all despite 50% of the blocks from the old subdivision still being in private ownership. We are indebted to Council for taking this initiative, and following it through.

The Reserve now features walking tracks, an extensive boardwalk over native grasslands, several excavated wetlands, two picnic shelters, a temporary carpark and a coastal viewing platform with spectacular views across Western Port to Churchill Island, Rhyll and beyond. Thousands of plants have been put in, and of course there is the amazing Butterfly Sculpture. It is a "must visit" venue, if you haven't been already, and the walks are fairly short and easy.

Friends of Scenic Estate Reserve was formed at a September public meeting, convened by the Council. The group aims to assist Council in managing the Reserve and provides an avenue for community input and feedback. The new group operates under the auspices of PICS, and I was privileged to be appointed group coordinator, and chairperson of the committee which also includes Carmen Bush, Michael Whelan, Cr Phil Wright, Dave Martin (representing BCSC) and Samantha Coleman (representing PINP). The committee has met in Sept., Oct and Dec, and is working well together.

Friends of Scenic Estate Reserve, now known by its acronym FOSER, was officially launched at the Reserve on 1st Nov, amid plenty of positive publicity. Almost 40 people met at the carpark, where BCSC mayor, Cr Kimberley Brown, officiated. The formal proceedings were followed by a guided tour through the Reserve and morning tea at the coastal picnic shelter. Participants were encouraged to get to know the common indigenous plant species at the Reserve, and to provide feedback on ideas for management, use and development of the Reserve. A leaflet was produced for the occasion, including a map and common plant species list.

Several FOSER working bees have been held to control weeds, and to assist with wetlands management by cutting Poa grass and laying it as thatching on bare soil around the wetlands. A workshop in Nov arranged by BCSC instructed volunteers on these techniques.

Our email list of volunteers has grown to a pleasing 46, but while they are kept informed, only a small proportion have so far been active participants.

The FOSER committee has had input into the design and placement of signage which is now in place along tracks, safety signage and barriers near the unstable coastal cliffs, and plant ordering for 2016. A Google docs account has also been created to store accessible documents relating to the Reserves history, development and natural features.

In the year ahead, we hope to take steps towards a detailed Vegetation Management Plan, define the role of FOSER more clearly, continue the control of serious weeds and encourage visitors by promoting the features of the Reserve and providing information on what can be enjoyed there. We also hope to find a more appropriate Aboriginal name for the Reserve.

We also look forward to an official opening of Scenic Estate Reserve, involving Council and State Govt ministers, early this year. John Eddy, FOSER coordinator 8.1.16

Jeff Nottle reported on this year's work of the **Preserve Western Port Action Group** and illustrated it with a power point.

- PWP expands Mission Statement to include any threats to the amenity of Western Port
- State Government establishes Infrastructure Victoria to recommend on container port
- PWP Media Release "The Port is Still on the Table"
- New brochures: "The threat has not gone away"
- PWP coastal erosion tours in Grantville

- Liaison with Councillors on their 20 May motion
- *“Developing a comprehensive submission to Infrastructure Victoria..... in conjunction with the key Bass Coast stakeholder groups.”*
- PWP presents to Planning Panels hearings on Yaringa development
- PWP presents to Bass Coast Council with *The Nature Conservancy* on potential natural shore line protection projects for Western Port
- PWP Media Release following the arrival of the West Telesto oil rig *“Oil industry and environment collide in Western Port”*
- PWP strengthens partnership with Sea Shepherd who speak at PICS meeting in July
- PWP obtains Council grant for signage
- Monash University student project concludes that PWP campaign has achieved key successes
- PWP appeared and presented to the: Port of Melbourne Lease Parliamentary Inquiry
- PWP Media Release
- *“It was an excellent opportunity to inform the politicians of Spring St of the importance of Western Port as a unique and fragile marine ecosystem, a nature-based tourism asset and a much loved holiday and fishing area.”*
- Melbourne University Professor and geomorphologist advises PWP of impact of required dredging for the container port
- PWP Media Release highlighting Professors comments of *“... the very high risk of greatly increased erosion throughout the northern, western and southern shores of Western Port including the eastern shoreline of Bass Coast around Coronet Bay and the Phillip Island north shore.”*
- PWP Media Release highlighting the erosion and inundation problems from port dredging and calls for the establishment of a: *Western Port Erosion and Inundation Compensation Fund* as part of business case.
- PWP makes headlines in Hastings papers, Leader papers with further follow up articles
- PWP involvement in review of RAMSAR management plans
- PWP obtains scientific research that highlights potential adverse impacts of further salination of aquifers in the Bunyip Foodbowl district following Port dredging
- PWP further enquiries being made
- PWP engagement with Bass Coast Council on current tourism strategy, environment and economic strategy projects

2016 Judgment year for Western Port Industrialisation or recreation?

- 2016 will likely see a recommendation to Government by Infrastructure Victoria on another container port for Victoria
- A container port in Western Port will be the signal for further industrialisation
- PWP key planned 2106 initiatives include:
- Engagement with Council on their Port initiatives
- Engagement with Bunyip food bowl stakeholders
- Planning for *Natural Shore Line Symposium* in March with guest



speakers from Deakin University, The Nature Conservancy US.....

- Planning underway with 3RR -102.7 FM
- Radio Marinara program 9.00-10.00am Sunday
- Special Western Port program being developed with PWP for February - TBC
 - PWP will continue campaign actions that include public awareness, information and advocacy for Western Port and against a container port
 - 2016 Judgment year for Western Port - Industrialisation or recreation?



Christine Grayden reported on the **children's activities**. Bass Coast Shire did not run a World Environment Day Schools Expo in 2015, and may not run them anymore, as they are concentrating their efforts on Sustainability Festivals. However, they did fund Animals of Oz for PICS again in 2015. This costs the shire \$400, and PICS approx \$150 for advertising and room hire. Around 60 children and 50 adults attended, so it is well worthwhile.

PHILLIP ISLAND CONSERVATION SOCIETY INC.

Minutes of General Meeting

Sat January 9, 2016, Parish Hall, Cowes.

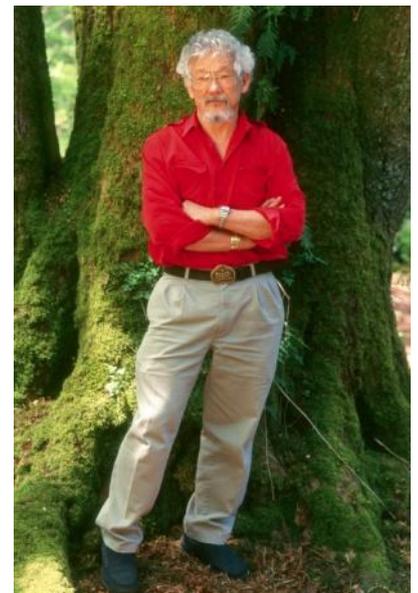
Attendance and apologies as per the sign-in book.

1. Come for a Walk book. Diane reported no progress.
 2. Saltwater Creek pathway. Christine Grayden reported that there is work in progress.
 3. Christine Grayden, our Secretary, read an e-mail that PICS has sent to the Council.
Councillor Phil Wright reported that there are no EPA standards for the noise at the track at the moment. He urged all the members to make a noise submission to the Bass Coast Natural Environment Sustainability Strategy. There are 22 days left before submissions close.
 4. Christine Grayden presented the correspondence report and moved its acceptance. Second by Lisa Schonberg. Moved unanimously.
 5. Member Margaret Johnson asked about the two containers on the cliff above Berry's Beach. Margaret Hancock suggested she call Bass Coast and ask the Council about it.
 6. Gillian Collins reported on the Port of Hastings.
 7. Jeff Nottle asked for a street stall on January 27th. Unanimously approved.
- Meeting closed at 10:00pm. Submitted, Gillian Collins, Minute Secretary.

Suzuki, Flannery, and Orestes

On March 7th, I was lucky to hear three remarkable scientists at the Melbourne Town Hall. Sponsored by The Wheeler Centre and Melbourne University, these three internationally renowned scientists and academic are on this speaking tour called "For Thought: Hope for the Planet."

David Suzuki's message, in a nutshell, was expressed by this thought - "When Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria was assassinated in June 1914, no one thought, "Uh-oh, World War I is starting..." We only recognize the significance of events in the context of history. Suzuki believes that significant environmental change is happening all over the world and, is widespread, and is having a positive impact on our future.



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PO Box 548
COWES, 3922

Suzuki, Flannery, and Orestes, contd..

Naomi Oreskes, a Harvard Professor of the History of Science, shared her understanding of science as a series of hypotheses that get tested, proved or disproved, and then developed further. Sometimes the results are correct, sometimes they are not. She used "Pascal's wager" as an example of the kind of open thought that drives scientists, and used examples of scientists whose theories have been disproved or developed, and explained that science has been full of conflicting theories since it became a recognised discipline. Some theories, such as Darwin's on natural selection, are not made by this method at all. One hundred percent agreement has rarely been a factor in the history of scientific theories, and we should not expect it to be. We should, however, expect that theories are based on evidence, not belief.

Tim Flannery shared data that revealed that, in spite of the dire predictions of a world population on the verge of an uncontrolled explosion, we are actually close to a stable world population. Countries all over the world are demonstrating populations that are at a replacement rate, and once the current child-bearing cohort have passed child-bearing age, the data shows that world population will stabilise. It will still be 8 or 9 billion, but that may be the limit.

It was exciting to be one of a packed Melbourne Town Hall audience to hear these positive messages.

Gillian Collins.



Photos this edition: Lisa Schonberg; Alia Schonberg; Maurice Schinkel; John Eddy; Melbourne Zoo; davidsuzuki.org; amazon.com; content.time.com