

Newsletter: June 2017

Dates for Your Diary 2017

All working bees to start at 10 am and go to 12 noon. Starting locations to be notified.

General Meeting Dates. All Saturday evenings, starting 7.30 p.m. in the Heritage Centre Meeting room, 89 Thompson Ave Cowes: 8th July; 7th October

Scenic Estate Reserve working bees. All Sundays, all 10 a.m. – 12 noon. All equipment and morning tea provided.
July 9: Site maintenance

Sept 10: Grassland Maintenance; Nov 26: Weed control.

Red Rocks Coastcare Working Bees. All Sundays, all 10 am – 12 noon. All equipment and morning tea provided.

September 24: Weed control; November 19: Spurbusters.

Start from Red Rocks car park unless notified otherwise.

Saltwater Creek Coastcare Work Party dates: All Sundays. All 10 a.m. – 12 noon. All equipment and morning tea provided: July 20: Planting; September 17: Clean up.

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:

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, 8th July, 7.30 p.m.

Heritage Centre meeting room, 89 Thompson Ave Cowes

Speaker: Kate Bennetts, Botanist: “Vegetation Values of Scenic Estate Reserve”

All welcome. Supper to follow.

Enqs: Christine 5956 8501 cgrayden@waterfront.net.au

PICS COMMITTEE 2018

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, Phil Wright

C/ee meets at 9.30 a.m. mostly on 1st Sat of each month at Community Emmaus Room, Parish Hall Cowes.

President's Letter to Members

As a result of a mild summer, a sunny autumn with good rain and now a mild winter, the local farmers are saying the paddocks look like paddocks of the spring-time! Last year's plantings are thriving with the conditions.



With the announcement by Infrastructure Victoria that Western Port is not the preferred site for a Container Port, there was widespread jubilation and opening of champagne bottles!

Following a Public Meeting called in March 2016 by PICS, because a Container Port at Hastings was being considered, a sub-committee Preserve Western Port [PWP] was formed. From that time and led by its dedicated Chair, Jeff Nottle, PWP engaged in a relentless but always responsible campaign to lobby and spread the message that Western Port's precious environmental assets were not to be compromised by a port development.

A joyful celebration was organised by PWP on Sunday June 4th in St Philip's Hall. Jeff thanked the many individuals and organisations for their considerable time and effort in working together for a positive outcome.

We all thank Jeff for his outstanding leadership in the PWP campaign.

PICS was successful in its application for a Bass Coast Council Community Grant to fund the publication of a book titled: Women in Conservation on Phillip Island. It is planned to launch the book on International Women's Day in March next year as part of the 150th Phillip Island celebrations of Closer Settlement.

Last month PINPS invited volunteer members of the Island environment groups to a BBQ and get-together at Churchill Island. The Reconciliation Group of PINPS organised a number of activities during Reconciliation Week and these were attended and enjoyed by many people.

The PINPS new CEO, Catherine Basterfield, has resumed the bi-monthly meetings with reps from Birdlife Bass Coast, FOK and PICS. As Catherine has worked for some time as Operations Manager of the organisation, she is understanding of the strong relationships that exist with PINPS and the Island environment groups. With the new Penguin Parade building project getting started, it is an exciting time for Catherine.

Anne Davie.

Perseverance Pays Off for PWP!

As we are all fully aware the actions of PWP over time has resulted in the recommendations of Infrastructure Victoria. Some recap of steps leading to the message below from Peter Francis of Council.

- PWP were instrumental in ensuring the (previous) Council held a Round Table on the Port issue with key stakeholders in April 2016;
- PWP provided input into the list of invitees to ensure appropriate and wide inclusion at the Round Table;
- PWP provided background papers and input at the Round Table that led to the group producing "Agreed Principles";
- PWP, Council and others including Western Port Protection Council formally supported these principles in submissions to IV;
- The current Council with leadership of Cr Michael Whelan ensured the Agreed Principles were formally adopted by Council in early 2017;
- IV held community consultations at Hastings that PWP attended. No Bass Coast Councillors attended as it was a Council day;
- Cr Michael Whelan then invited IV to attend an invitation only session in Wonthaggi;
- All original Round Table invitees were then invited to discussions with IV on 22 March;
- PWP spoke at the session on environmental and tourism impacts;
- Tourism representatives also spoke on potential impacts;
- PWP lodged a Response Paper to IV on 2 April that included all key issues raised at the BCSC IV meeting and the Response Paper was supported by all key Phillip Island stakeholder groups;
- IV release their recommendations on 23 May that Hasting was rejected and Bay West supported;
- IV contacted Council on 24 May with the message as outlined below.



This is an excellent example to show that the PWP input was clearly instrumental in influencing the final recommendations to Government.

Jeff continues: I had a call from Andrew Varga this afternoon. He is one of the Infrastructure Victoria representatives that attended our community roundtable on 22 March which some of you attended.

Andrew advised that the feedback provided by community members at that forum helped them to form the view that Bay West was the more appropriate location for a second port – specifically the potential environmental impact issues that were raised. He said that prior to the forum they had not really understood the impact that the ‘perception’ of having a major container port close to a significant tourism destination might have, quite apart from the actual environmental risks.

It was great that he called to give us that feedback and he said they really valued the information provided at the forum.

And... from another IV person **Christian Taylor** (Principal Technical Advisor Infrastructure Victoria).

" I think it is great the way your group and other champion the environmental issues so decision makers take them seriously."



Preserve Western Port group celebrating, l-r: Lisa, Kate, Anne, Jeff, Pauline, Alia, John, Virginia, Sue and Kevin.

Membership renewals

Thank you to the 56 members who have renewed their membership subscriptions. You will receive your membership card upon renewal. Another 26 members remain unfinancial. Please note that the PICS subscription year starts at the 1st of January. We would greatly appreciate you paying your membership promptly. If your subscription is overdue, we include a membership renewal form with this newsletter. The form also includes a Public Fund donation form if you would like to make a tax deductible donation to PICS to help us further our environmental and educational work. You can pay either your subscription or donate by cheque or postal order to PO BOX 548 COWES 3922, or online at <http://picsvictoria.org.au/get-involved/become-a-member/> We look forward to your continued membership and support! For enquiries regarding membership or donations please contact Christine Grayden 5956 8501 or email: cgrayden@waterfront.net.au

Plastic bag free Phillip Island – an invitation

Hi there,

We would like to invite you to attend our *Plastic Bag Free Phillip Island & San Remo information session* as part of the Island Whale Festival on Saturday 8th of July from 12.30pm at the Cowes Cultural Center. We will run a short presentation about our campaign and its aims. Anthony Hill, from Plastic Pollution Solutions <<http://www.plasticpollutionsolutions.com.au/>>, who many of you met last year at the PITBA event at the Nobbies, will also be in attendance for a Q&A session.

In addition, along with Destination Phillip Island, Phillip Island Nature Parks and Plastic Pollution Solutions we are also hosting an *Ocean Trivia Dinner* at the Cheeky Goose from 6pm on Friday 7th of July. Anthony will again take on the role of quiz master, so we know we're in for a fun (and educational) evening! Further details > <http://islandwhales.com.au/program/day-1-friday-7th-july/>.

For further information on Plastic Bag Free Phillip Island and San Remo in the meantime, please find our factsheet attached or join our facebook page [facebook.com/PlasticBagFreePISR/](https://www.facebook.com/PlasticBagFreePISR/) <<https://www.facebook.com/PlasticBagFreePISR/>>.

We hope to see you at the Island Whale Festival! Best wishes, ***Lauren Barker*** Founder Plastic Bag Free Phillip Island & San Remo



Planning News

Margaret Hancock

There is always something going on with planning! Sometimes we know what it is – and sometimes we just speculate!

1. The Isle of Wight Hotel: “Yes”, we have heard that it is under new ownership but “No” we don’t have any news about future plans.
2. The Boys Home at Newhaven: Vandalism continues, and the relevant authorities appear to be unable to take much in the way of preventative action, and also unable to prosecute.
3. The proposed housing subdivision of what was the Hayes property in Red Rocks Rd: PICS has had two on site meetings with the shire, one of these also was attended by the developer. We are hopeful that some of the mature trees may be saved, and that shade trees will be planted on the - at present – bare, nature strip.
4. The proposed excision of the low ground near Saltwater Creek received numerous objections, was withdrawn by the applicant, and the file has been closed.
5. The outcome of the VCAT hearing of a proposed three storey building at 86-88 Thompson Avenue was disappointing. I think I am correct in saying that there were nine objections. On the day of the hearing I represented PICS and myself – no other objectors appeared and none of them apologised – which certainly gives the impression that objections weren’t serious! A minor amendment was made to the plans, so that the front wall of the top storey was moved back by 1.5 metres, which will somewhat improve the view from Thompson Avenue.

6. To our disappointment all the mature trees have been removed from the site of the new medical hub in Church Street. This has been a learning experience for us! We didn't realise that Commonwealth proposals are exempt from shire rules and regulations – we won't make this mistake again.

7. The caravan park proposal at the low-lying land adjacent to the Forrest Caves car park has returned! Yes, PICS is objecting – this land just isn't suitable for this sort of development – or perhaps for any built development.

8. Blue Gum Reserve: In response to a request from a nearby ratepayer, shire staff dumped fill into the precious ephemeral wetland! Consequently, PICS held consultations with the shire, the fill was removed, all the nearby weed species were removed, the wetland has been planted with appropriate species, the new drainage scheme is working, the ducks are paddling happily – but we are still waiting for the return of the frogs! AND PICS has been invited to help plan the new "Story Board" which will give the history of the Reserve, and describe the various species which live there!

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL MEETING HELD 8.4.2017, 7.30 P.M.

PRESENT: As per attendance book

APOLOGIES: As per attendance book

SPEAKER: member John Eddy, co-ordinator of Friends of Scenic Estate Reserve, gave a Power Point talk titled: "Scenic Estate Reserve: an evolving landscape", which was well received. The text of a similar talk of John's can be found at pidhs.org.au Meetings and Talks.

Vote of Thanks: Margaret Hancock gave a brief history of Ailsa Swan and Murray Hilgendorf's involvement, forcing the Town and Country Planning Board in the 1960s to do something about Chinamen's Estate. PICS even thought about buying a couple of blocks to preserve the moonahs. Nothing positive happened until council mergers. Under the Shire of Phillip Island Julie Box's father lost his seat on council as he was one of the councillors proposing that developers should be made to seal roads and put in drainage when they put in a subdivision, but they lost the election to those who did not believe developers had any obligations. Margaret said she was grateful to John for collecting all the historical information together. It is also wonderful that BCSC has acquired the money to actually do something positive at SER.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS meeting 7.2.2107. Penny Manning/Margaret Hancock. Carried.

MATTERS ARISING in reports.

CORRESPONDENCE:

TREASURER'S REPORT:

Christine Grayden, acting treasurer, presented the report which was circulated at the meeting. Christine Grayden/John Eddy carried.

Penny suggested that we could save some money by getting Brian Paynter's office to print off the newsletter for us.

OTHER REPORTS:

Planning - Margaret Hancock

1. VCAT: re 3 storey building in Thompson Ave, went to mediation hearing. Some years ago councillors accepted 3 storeys for this area. End result was that the third storey has been set back 1.5m which has caused changes internally. Developers need to pay a cost towards bundling of overhead cables to save cypress trees. Coles and Woolworths had to underground power lines for this reason.

2. Sid Hayes's property, Red Rocks Rd. Sid totally cleared the nature strip. Not many trees will be saved in this development on the blocks themselves.

3. Medical Hub trees: a bit of progress. Objectors meeting with Jan Child, Bass Coast Health soon.

4. Toscana Rise - PICS et al previously got lower subdivision stopped. Now the owner wants to subdivide lower land for one house. Due to CFA requirements the house will be surrounded by grass and small plants only. Electricity also needs to come down the hill. If permission is not given for the subdivision, the owners should give the land to the foreshore reserve. This may go to VCAT.

5. Blue Gum Reserve - truckload of fill wrecked what was a ephemeral wetland. Public outcry about this, especially from Blue Gum Reserve users. Pam Rothfield (mayor) said to take it all out again. This has resulted in consultation with BCSC staff and Frank Donahue of Ecosystems Australia, a wetlands expert, and users. The result will be much better than what was there originally. Work will begin in 2 weeks. Bob Baird said the area suffers from bad engineering from the start, with a 1 1/2 m diameter pipe servicing the estate and holding much stagnant water.

6. Blue Gum Alley - signage changed from emergency vehicles only to local traffic only. Dust problem has defeated wildlife. Something will need to be done, especially once the Catholic school starts.

Margaret also said the Forrest Caves caravan park and Newhaven West subdivisions are also on the horizon.

RED ROCKS COAST CARE - JOHN EDDY

1. No working bees have been held this year, and the first is scheduled for 9th April. However, I may need to get some volunteers together to help with a few thistles, and some Sea Spurge in seed, especially near Penguin Rocks stairway.

2. West of Justice Rd, our main Spurgebuster site for the past 3 years, there is only a scattering of sea spurge plants now. They would probably only take 1 or 2 people an hour to clean up completely. These plants have emerged from the seed reserve since our last working bee there in Nov 2016.

3. The moonahs have been flowering prolifically over February, and are generally looking healthy. Good rain over Feb would have helped.

4. The Banksia Grove, east of Doug's Track, has generally been regarded as outside our area for RRCC work, but is very significant because of the great age and size of the trees. Perhaps we should now consider extending our work area to include it more regularly, now that the rest of Red Rocks is mostly under control. Weeds there are manageable, at present. Several years ago, BCSC had contractors spray a heavy infestation of Cape Ivy in that vicinity, and that was effective. Now a small amount of regrowth of that weed is showing up, and follow-up control would be timely. The Grove is bounded on the south and west by a creek/drain which has a variety of significant weeds in it (Arum Lily, Datura, Wandering Jew), and much rubbish from the old tip site directly to its south. This creek makes access difficult in winter and spring.

SALTWATER CREEK COAST CARE – JOHN EDDY FOR KEVIN HARRIS

1. Kevin and I have inspected our plantings and results are still OK. Not much activity as Kevin is busy renovating a house for sale, but a Work Party is planned for Easter Monday. It will concentrate on general cleaning up, especially of old guards.

2. Plants are ordered for the July planting day.

FRIENDS OF SCENIC ESTATE RESERVE - JOHN EDDY

1. The Vegetation Management Plan for Scenic Estate Reserve has been completed, mostly funded from PICS Public Fund. A copy can be emailed out to anyone interested. It will be the guiding light for all our activities this year and beyond.

2. Control of the annual weed Stinkwort has been a recent pre-occupation. It seeds prolifically in late autumn and last year invaded the small wetlands when, due to a misunderstanding, contractors failed to control it. We have targeted Stinkwort with working bees in January and February, hand pulling as much as we can before flowering. Contractors have sprayed the main infestation in early Feb and followed up again mid March. More hand-pulling in outer areas is also required now to prevent seeding this year. Contractors also targeted kikuyu.

3. Our Clean up Australia Day working bee on 5th March attracted six volunteers and collected 5 bags of rubbish and 5 of recyclables.

4. A FOSER Newsletter was emailed out in Feb

5. I gave a talk on the History of SER to Phillip Island Historical Society on 8th March, similar to tonight. It was well received.

6. The FOSER committee met on 28th March. Major agenda item was the implementation of the VMP management actions for the Moonah Woodland.

Phillip Island Conservation Society, Inc.

The Penguin Newsletter

June 2017

If undeliverable, return to:

PICS Inc.

PO Box 548

COWES, 3922

A red dot indicates your subscription is overdue. A membership form is enclosed. Thank you.

General Meeting minutes continued...

7. The compulsory buy-back of blocks at SER still in private ownership is proceeding well, and may be completed in just a few months.
8. Shire Council and PINP seem to be pushing ahead with Stage 2 proposals, including a second viewing platform, and a boardwalk and platform through saltmarsh in the NE corner.
9. Modifications to the small wetlands is being considered to increase its capacity to hold water.
10. Mangrove planting in 2016 has seen some success. The Sept PV planting of 400 seedlings is presently at 52% survival. Direct seeding in Dec shows only 18% survival due to crab damage, but 80% inside protective wire cages.
11. Next Working Bee is on 21st May, when we will be most likely planting Moonahs.

The report raised a lot of concern among members regarding the proposed boardwalk through the small saltmarsh area of the reserve. Both Alison Oates and Kate Bennetts (botanists) are opposed to any path through the saltmarsh. Pauline Taylor suggested that John check the status of the saltmarsh plants under the EPBC Act. John said the saltmarsh area is managed by PINP and Roz Jessop, Environment Manager, has approved the walkway. However DELWP is not happy about it.

GENERAL BUSINESS:

Ken Gray brought along a Seniors newspaper which contained an article on Hooded Plovers.

Penny thanked John for the excellent article in the Western Port Biosphere's Connector magazine. The article is about Jye Anderson doing his work experience with John late last year and is reprinted from the PICS newsletter.

Meeting closed 9.45 p.m.