



“The Penguin” Newsletter

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Newsletter: June 2019

Dates for Your Diary 2019

To be advised for Coastcare

Friends of Scenic Estate Reserve working bee dates - all 10 a.m. - 12 noon. Equipment and morning tea provided. All meet at SER car park:

Sunday 18 August - gorse control

Sunday 10th November - site maintenance

GENERAL MEETINGS: All at: 2.00 p.m. Cowes Cultural Centre meeting room 1.

Sunday 14 July **NB CHANGE OF DATE DUE TO WHALE FESTIVAL PREVIOUS WEEKEND.** See below.

Sunday 29 September Speaker TBA.

Enquiries: Christine Grayden, ph 0400 900 612 e phillipislandconservation@gmail.com (note change of email address)

Sub-committees of PICS:

Red Rocks Coastcare/Friends of Scenic Estate Reserve: Co-ordinator is John Eddy, ph 0418 398 682

e: johneddy1946@gmail.com (note change of email address)

Other groups:

Barb Martin Bush Bank: Is now open again.

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 0419552385 OR 0484921028.

Friends of Churchill Island (FOCIS): email: secretary@focis.org.au

Groundswell Bass Coast Climate Change action group: <http://groundswellbasscoast.com> Contact Pauline Taylor: gpctaylor@gmail.com

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

PHILLIP ISLAND CONSERVATION SOCIETY INC

GENERAL MEETING

Sunday 14 July, 2019, 2.00 p.m.

Cowes Cultural Centre, meeting room 1

ALL WELCOME

Enqs: Christine Grayden, secretary, m 0400 900 612

SPEAKERS: From AGL (Australian Gas Light Company) re the Floating Storage and Regasification Unit they propose to build at Crib Point in Western Port, and from AAP, pipeline builders.
Information and Q&A session.

PICS COMMITTEE 2019

President: Jeff Nottle

Vice President: Anne Davie

Secretary: Christine Grayden, ph 0400 900 612 e: phillipislandconservation@gmail.com

Minutes Secretary: Grazyna Mackiewicz

Treasurer: Matthew Ingham. Assistant Treasurer: Christine Grayden

Committee: Margaret Hancock (planning), Penny Manning (Chair of c/ee meetings/planning) Terry Nott, Lisa Schonberg, Phil Wright, Jane Jobe

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

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT - JEFF NOTTLE

Thanks to PICS members and the PICS Committee we have finished our PICS planning for the next 50 years. Details of the plan are outlined in this edition. Members will notice that the process has reinforced what PICS has been achieving over the years. We now have documented aspirations that will guide us through the many issues that are presented to PICS. The PICS Committee will develop strategies and review those strategies from time to time as we take steps to achieve our aspirations.

With the Federal election result behind us I believe that whilst we have a new Government, conservation issues will need even more constant efforts. Climate change and environmental stress has not gone away and I believe the election has brought this issue to the front of many peoples' minds. Our young activists that have attended climate rallies and spoken out have been changed forever and will be a further force for climate and conservation change over time.



We have been responding to the concerns of the community at the loss of the trees and especially the Blue Gum at the Cowes Transit Centre. As part of our discussions with Council we have been successful in obtaining additional planting that go some way to honor and recognise the communities' loss. Council has agreed to plant an additional 20 Blue Gums that will be planted at the Blue Gum Reserve. Also we have entered into a partnership with the National Trust (Bass Coast) to advance discussions on establishing a Significant Trees Register for Phillip Island.

Significant planning changes are due to be imposed on Bass Coast as a result of the State Government announcing that we will be part of the Government's Distinctive Areas and Landscapes legislation. Following the recent presentation at our General Meeting the Committee is continuing to focus on this Government initiative.

I would like to thank members and the Committee for the ongoing commitment to the aspirations of PICS and recognizing the need to defend, preserve and protect our natural environment for now and future generations.

The Next 50 Years

Established in 1968 the Phillip Island Conservation Society (PICS) has achieved significant conservation outcomes for Phillip Island over the last 50 years. We have taken the opportunity to reflect on previous key PICS involvements and achievements and consider key aspirations for the next 50 years.

The planning process has involved a planning workshop facilitated by Greg Johnson in November 2018 that included 17 PICS members and committee representatives. The workshop identified PICS guiding principles, key aspirations and key challengers. Strategies were developed that outline the way in which PICS intends to achieve specific outcomes and fulfill the guiding principles over a long time frame.

The output from the PICS planning workshop was considered in detail by the PICS management committee and on two occasions in February and April 2019. Detailed strategies will be developed, prioritised and agreed by the committee. Strategies will be reviewed from time to time by the PICS committee. The committee will report to members and the community on achievements and identify any gaps in resources or other challenges over time.

PICS committee endorsed "PICS the next 50 years" including guiding principles, key aspirations and key challenges on 6 April 2019.

PICS Guiding Principles

Guiding principles are generally defined as: *A broad philosophy that guides an organisation throughout in all circumstances, irrespective of changes in its strategies, goals, type of work, or top level management.*

Guiding Principles

1. Conserve, protect, enhance and restore Phillip Island's native fauna and flora with climate change in mind, whilst educating the wider community
2. Recognise that Phillip Island's unique environment is part of Western Port, an internationally significant UNESCO biosphere reserve and Ramsar surrounds
3. Ensure Phillip Island is protected from over and inappropriate development and tourism that is not ecologically sustainable
4. Support total renewable energy for Phillip Island
5. PICS is an apolitical, transparent and inclusive organisation
6. Strengthen partnerships with key referral organisations and stakeholders
7. Conserve and protect the marine ecosystems around Phillip Island
8. Integrate an approach with key authorities on shared vision for Phillip Island
9. Defend Western Port against industrialisation and other threats
10. Ensure transport respects the limited ecological carrying capacity of Phillip Island



PICS Key Aspirations

The key aspirations listed below include short, medium and long term aspirations.

- * That preservation, conservation and enhancement of the natural world habitat, flora and fauna are prioritised
- * That Phillip Island becomes a National or State Park or receives similar formal protections
- * That existing settlement boundaries are maintained, monitored and honored
- * That mandatory cat and pest control support re-wilding of Phillip Island
- * That expansion of marine reserves around Phillip Island occurs
- * That PICS is consulted on strategies and development proposals with Government and peak bodies

- * That PICS leads the recognition of “the environment is our economy”
- * That PICS strongly supports the establishment of an independent Environmental Asset Fund for Phillip Island
- * That PICS is recognised as a Council Referral Authority
- * That PICS is sustainably resourced
 - * That PICS is acknowledged as a valued community resource

PICS Key Challenges

- * Climate change;
- * Working with all levels of Government and key agencies
- * Population growth and maintenance of settlement boundaries
- * Visitor numbers, footprint and demand management
- * Noise controls
- * Commercial shipping
- * Industrialisation pressures for Western Port
- * Conservation of environmental assets on private land
- * Sustainable management of roads and transport
- * Identification of environmentally significant land/features
- * Lack of consensus on how Phillip Island should be presented
- * PICS engagement with the wider community
- * PICS succession planning

PHILLIP ISLAND CONSERVATION SOCIETY INC MINUTES OF GENERAL MEETING SATURDAY 14.4.2019

Welcome and acknowledgement of indigenous peoples.

PRESENT: As per attendance book

APOLOGIES: As per attendance book

SPEAKER: Jodi Kennedy, manager Strategy and Growth, Bass Coast Shire Council re Distinctive Areas and Landscapes Act 2018.

Not a lot of detail yet, some briefings which Jodi has attended. State government initiative and council partnership. The first area to come under the Act was the Macedon Ranges. A Ministerial Advisory C/ee was appointed and made recommendations. Macedon did not have settlement boundaries, which BCSC does have. The Macedon Ranges is a model and was written so that it could apply to other areas. Bass Coast/Surf Coast and Bellarine Peninsulas have been chosen to be suitable. The Bass Coast inclusion was a state election promise. This is to protect Bass Coast from over-development.

Need to talk with traditional owner groups as part of the process – also for new Bunurong Walk which was also an election promise.

What makes an area/landscape distinctive? What are the threats to the area/landscape? Process is run by Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP): 1. Declared in Parliament. 2. Twelve months to prepare Statement of Planning Policy. 3. Endorsement of SPP by traditional owners, council, public entities. 4. Planning Scheme amendment. Process includes much technical work and three rounds of community engagement.

Can protect from over-development, strengthen settlement boundaries and height controls. Also look at setbacks, scale, look and feel of buildings, not just height. How the building interacts at street level. Also neighbourhood character. Need to decide whether we want all of Bass Coast declared or just part of it?

A Q & A session followed. Notes are available from the secretary: phillipislandconservation@gmail.com or phone 0400 900 612.

VOTE OF THANKS: Vice President Anne Davie gave the vote of thanks to Jodi for helping us further understand this complex process and presented Jodi with a dozen Bimbadeen free range eggs.

GENERAL MEETING

Minutes of the previous meeting held on Sunday 8.7.2018. Christine read through the minutes as it had been some time since the meeting.

Matters arising:

Race track noise issue - ongoing

Pleasant Point revegetation project – to John Eddy's report

REPORTS

John Eddy gave the following four reports:

Red Rocks Coastcare: removal of Sea Spurge along the foredune from Justice Rd to Red Rocks Point.

Friends of Scenic Estate Reserve:

1. Most of our efforts have gone into removing Stinkwort to prevent seedset, which this prolific annual daisy depends on. All under control now.
2. Carmen Bush and I recently spent 26 person-hours in conducting a survey of all the major weeds across all sections of the Reserve. Will be an invaluable tool for weed control over the next 12 months.
3. Widening of the Tourist Rd will probably impact the southern edge of the Reserve. Surveying work has been done, but we are not sure what the likely outcome will be. FOSER has suggested the access to the existing carpark be moved 50-100 metres to the west for safety reasons.
4. We are still seeking to re-name the Reserve with an indigenous title.
5. Mangrove planting to help reduce the erosion of the coastal cliffs was done in 2016-17. It did not yield great results, but about 10%, i.e. about 40-50 new mangroves, have established and look set for the long term.

Blue Gum Reserve:

1. I represented PICS at a site meeting on March 21st to discuss ideas for a Masterplan, probably including a fenced off area for dogs. It was agreed by Shire planners and local stakeholders that the 3 Blue Gum logs stored at the Shire Depot be placed at Blue Gum Reserve as informal seating and habitat for small creatures. Have not been delivered by last Tuesday.
2. For that Masterplan, I drew up a map showing the position of the various species of trees and shrubs in the Reserve and submitted it to the Shire. It was based on the 2015 Vegetation Survey of the Reserve and Blue Gum Alley done by Alison Oates. A copy is available to anyone who wants it.

Pleasant Point, (Rhyll Coast Action):

95% survival of the 500 shrubs and grasses planted in July last year. Excellent so far, though some damage to Swamp Gums caused by possums and wallabies.

Jeff thanked John for all of his work on behalf of PICS. Carried with acclamation.

Planning: Margaret Hancock reported that at the VCAT hearing for the caravan/camping park at Forrest Caves the proponent produced new plans and some new expert witness material and so the VCAT hearing was postponed until September 23. Margaret thanked Christine for all of the work she did on the PICS submission.

Treasurer's report: Christine presented the report from 1.1.19-31.3.19. She reported that the society has now purchased book keeping software known as Cashbook Lite for \$160. All upgrades are free and there is support available. The software is already speeding up the book keeping process. Matt Ingham is helping Christine and has agreed to be called Treasurer, though he cannot do all that is required on the island such as banking etc.

"That the Treasurer's report be received". Christine/Pauline Taylor *Carried.*

Correspondence dealt with by committee at recent c/ee meeting. A table of each of the past month's inwards and outwards correspondence was available at the meeting.

General Business:

1. Tree removal outcomes: PICS tried to stop the tree removal by meeting with Mayor, councillors, Infrastructure Director, Project Manager, but plans inflexible.
 - a. Able to get the trunk and three large sections of the old Blue Gum saved. Trunk is now at Finding the Grain in Newhaven while it seasons. To be milled to assist seasoning process. Three sections to go to Blue Gum Reserve. Need suggestions of what to do with trunk. e.g. of large cypress stump at Rhyll jetty which is going to be turned into a chainsaw sculpture of a fisherman at the steering wheel with waves and sea creatures. \$15,000 project.
 - b. PICS also discussed the possibility of a Significant Tree Register with Mayor and councillors and they were supportive. Jane Jobe has done much background research on this for PICS. Need to work out criteria and method of evaluating trees to go on the register.
 - c. PICS asked for more offset planting and input into the landscaping of the area.

2. Tree commemoration event, Town Square, Sunday 31st March: This was initiated and organised by Camille Monet with help from Dr Laura Brearley and PICS members. About 100 people attended to hear speakers, sing two songs composed by Laura, and express their feelings. John Eddy spoke for PICS. Cr Geoff Ellis also spoke. Anne Davie thanked Laura and Maria Venn (present at this meeting) for this dignified, measured and respectful event. They and Camille are to be congratulated as it was a high-risk exercise that could easily have become adversarial.

Q: What is the actual reason the 150 year old Blue Gum was removed?

A - Jane Jobe. Regulations around bus requirements such as turning circle meant there was no way to save the tree and have the interchange. The implications for the trees was not considered in the planning. A culture of supporting biodiversity is needed at council.

3. Community pop-up session Regional Roads Victoria: You're invited to meet the project team and see our updated plans to improve safety, traffic flow and access along Philip Island Road in San Remo.

When: Between 10am and 3pm on Tuesday 16 April

Where: San Remo foreshore, Marine Parade, San Remo VIC 3925

Grazyna Mackiewicz outlined the problems with the proposed plans for San Remo's traffic management. Members affected were urged to attend and make comment.

4. PICS planning for the next 50 years. Jeff is finalizing the document outlining the guiding principles, key aspirations and threats. We are not reinventing the wheel, more sharpening our focus. The final document will be in the June newsletter.

5. PICS representatives' meeting with new BCSC CEO Ali Wastie. Positive discussion with Jeff and Anne. Ali is keen to get out and meet the community. She related that the state government has an unrelenting pursuit of the car ferry. She undertook that PICS will be involved from the beginning of any discussions that may concern us. She has a strong planning background and is very committed to reconciliation. We need to invite her to a general meeting.

6. Port of Hastings Community Consultative Committee. Gillian Collins was our representative for many years but has not attended for a while for various reasons. Jeff thanked her for her years of service on the POH c/ee. Terry Nott has undertaken to represent PICS now and attended the most recent meeting. The minutes can be read on the POH website: <https://www.portofhastings.com/consultative-committee>

7. Cruise ships at Rhyll. Letter from PICS member, representing some Rhyll resident, Carmen Bush re social and environmental problems caused by increased numbers and size of cruise ships. They are unable to use the Cowes jetty for their tenders so anchor off Observation Point and the tenders take passengers to the Rhyll jetty from where they are bussed to Cowes. Some ships carry 2,000 passengers. Carmen is concerned that the ships are causing wave wash at the Point and that recreational vessels sightseeing at the cruise ships are causing disturbance to roosting birds at the Point.

The ships arrive about 10 a.m. and do not leave until 11 p.m. after the Penguin Parade. The buses travel fast along the Cowes Rhyll Rd and may account for some wildlife road kill. The lights of the ship are also an issue. Actions: Contact PINP to ask what they are doing about the Observation Point situation. Contact Parks Victoria to ask if effect of wave wash is being monitored. Contact Parks Vic CEO Matt Jackson to ask if there is a budget for upgrading Cowes jetty so that it can take the tenders and keep them away from Observation Point. Contact POH and ask if one of their orange patrol boats is available to supervise recreational vessels to keep them away from Observation Point.

8. Victorian Marine & Coastal Forum is being held in Melbourne in June. Penny Manning asked if PICS can spare one of its Red Rocks Coastcare places to provide free entry to another Coastcare person. Agreed. Penny, Alison Oates and John Wright, PICS members, are attending.

9. Four lane road plans from Scenic Estate Reserve through Surf Beach. Jane Jobe commented that since Jodi said the Distinctive Areas and Landscapes legislation could help protect this stretch of landscape, it would be best if this Regional Roads Victoria project was put on hold.

Action: PICS to write to Regional Roads Victoria, Richard Wynne Minister for Planning, Premier and Jordan Crugnale MP seeking cessation of the plans for the 4 lane road until after the DAL process.

10. John Eddy reported that Maurice Schinkel had lent him a USB containing the Victorian State of the Environment report for 2018. The report is extremely comprehensive and full of statistics. It is available online at <https://www.ces.vic.gov.au/reports/state-environment-2018>

11. Biolinks. John Eddy explained that the Biolinks project mentioned by Jodi was set up by BCSC with community consultation as a way to retain and protect native vegetation. It includes roadsides, wildlife corridors, Landcare plantings and aims to link them up including through landholders amenable to having more planted on their land.

12. Wildlife road kills. Ron Day reported that he has been monitoring Cowes-Rhyll Rd for 65 days, 4 days a week since Feb 4 and has counted 88 road kill of a number of species. He is putting the data onto spreadsheets and sharing it with Regional Roads Victoria, BCSC and PINP. This road has the highest density of road kill on Phillip Island on a BCSC road. Once PINP came on board with this project it gave it credibility. Virtual fencing is being taken seriously by some people in council. Static signage does not work. Need dynamic signage and lower speed limits. Ron reported comments he has had while on the roadsides from visitors who have been distressed by amount of road kill. He is confident now that something good will come from his efforts. Jeff thanked Ron on behalf of PICS.

13. Anne Davie reported that a lot will be happening around the environment in July. The Whale Festival is being held on 5-7 July. Laura Brearley has written a new song "No place for oil" regarding the plans to drill for oil in the Great Australian Bight, which is a Humpback whale birthing ground.

Anne also reported that at this year's Phillip Island Festival of Stories July 26-28, Jeff Hansen, managing director Australia of Sea Shepherd will be featured. Also Professor Richard Tanter, Nobel Laureate from ICAN anti nuclear weapons organisation.



Meeting closed 4.40 p.m. The next general meeting will be dependent on the availability of speakers from AGL and AAP. NOTE: Now confirmed to be Sunday July 14th at 2 p.m.

Phillip Island Conservation Society, Inc.

The Penguin Newsletter

June 2019

If undeliverable, return to:

PICS Inc.

PO Box 548

COWES, 3922

2019 Victorian Marine and Coastal Forum - Penny Manning.

How fortunate I was to represent Red Rocks Coast Care at the Forum at the Crown Conference Centre on June 13 – 14. Four sessions ran concurrently throughout the two days with opportunities to change between rooms at morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea. The themes being – Policy, Volunteering, Partnerships and Changing Climate and Coasts. I had hard choices to make between sessions but was never disappointed. I knew little about the Victorian Marine and Coastal Act and was pleased to learn how it would impact on the future. Adding “Marine” to all Coastal plans indicates that new plans will have to be prepared and updating Management Guidelines is essential and urgent. Indigenous history and culture must be considered in all coastal plans. Indigenous voices must be listened to and heard.

Phillip Heath covered the changing beach profile and sand distribution along the Inverloch surf beach and the economic value of the beach as the beach and dune vegetation are highly valued by both visitors and locals. Derek Hibbert coordinated a group of many stakeholders to endeavour to find some way to protect the main assets on the foreshore – the Surf Club and the road. One solution is wet sand fencing with beach nourishment where early fencing has been destroyed during storms.

The last presentation told of the constant problem of dogs on beaches, particularly where dogs are off-leash and preventing others from enjoying the beach. I was most impressed with their large posters “How Deep are Your Pockets?”. These posters show the fines for everything from fires on beaches, littering, disobeying dog laws etc.

The Forum ended with a Q and A Panel, moderated by Rafael Epstein (ABC Radio) with the title *Our Coastal Future: How can we collaborate to solve marine and coastal challenges in the face of climate change?*

All presentation are to be made available on the Forum website. I am very grateful for the opportunity to attend the Forum and came away with the belief that every little bit helps and that perseverance is essential.

