

Newsletter: March 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 April; 8th July; 7th October

Scenic Estate Reserve working bees. All Sundays, all 10 a.m. – 12 noon. All equipment and morning tea provided.
Mar 5: Clean Up Australia Day; May 21: Planting; June 18: Planting; July 9: Planting;
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.
April 4: Clean Up; June 4: Planting; July 2: Planting; September 24: Weed control; November 19: Spurgebusters.
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: April 16: clean up; July 23: 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 8 April, 7.30 p.m.

Heritage Centre meeting room, 89 Thompson Ave Cowes

Speaker: Environment student Jye Anderson will speak on helping sea turtles in Costa Rica, mangroves and other environmental adventures!

All welcome

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

The Society's AGM was held on January 7th, on one of the hottest nights of the summer! Once again the members presented Reports on their Group's activities, during the last 12 months. It is just remarkable how many people volunteer in the activities throughout the year, that protect and enhance the Island's unique natural environment.

There is a new member on the PICS committee, former Councillor, Phil Wright. Phil's considerable knowledge from his 8 years on the Bass Coast Council, is most welcome.

A reminder that the Society's committee meetings are held on the first Saturday, each month, in the Emmaus Meeting Room of St Philip's Parish Hall in Thompson Avenue. The Meeting starts at 9.30 and all members are welcome to attend.

The PINP'S Annual Open Day this year is on Sunday, March 5th. This event is now a popular one on the Community Calendar.

The Friends of Scenic Estate [FOSER] continues to do great work on the Estate. Please note when Working Bee days are planned as perhaps you might like to join one of our energetic groups, who are achieving wonderful results on the various sites.

The Island received 54 mm of rain, in a recent heavy down-pour. This is a huge rain for February and will do wonders for the last year's plantings. *Anne Davie.*

Membership renewals

Thank you to the 51 members who have renewed their membership subscriptions. You will receive your membership card upon renewal. Another 50 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. 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

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING INCLUDING ANNUAL REPORTS. 7.1.2017, Parish Hall, Cowes

Welcome and acknowledgement of indigenous elders past and present and indigenous people living in our community today.

Present: As per attendance book

Apologies: As per attendance book

"That the MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS AGM held 1.9.2016 be accepted" Margaret Hancock/Pauline Taylor

Carried.

ANNUAL REPORTS

1. PRESIDENT:

It is with pleasure that as PICS President, I present the Report for the year ending 2016.

With the Report each year, it has been my custom to acknowledge another 12 months of dedicated commitment by the PICS committee at its end. Tonight I want to thank the committee at the very beginning as it has once again been a privilege to work with such a dedicated group of people. Each brings his or her individual talent and skill. We are a good Team.

I want to particularly thank Christine Grayden for her outstanding contribution. She has had the responsibility of not only the Secretary but also the Treasurer, as the Society has been unable, at this stage, to fill the role. Also with John she produces the 4 great PICS Newsletters each year, and Christine puts together the submissions to government when

PICS comments on Draft proposals and Acts such as the Marine and Coastal Act. This morning she has held 2 sessions for children of the Animals of Oz in the Heritage Centre. Christine we do sincerely and warmly say thank you.

PICS hosted Meet the Candidates in the Parish Hall for the Federal and Local elections. These were informative and well attended.

The Official Opening of the Scenic Estate Reserve took place in February by the then Minister, Hon. Lisa Neville MP. FOSE [Friends of Scenic Estate Reserve] under the leadership of John Eddy is dedicated and the impact of their ongoing work is evident. This work was recognised as a finalist in the Tidy Towns Competition.

At the last PINPS Community Advisory Committee Meeting in December, members were able to farewell and thank Matt Jackson, CEO of PINPS for his strong leadership and respectful relationship with the Island's environment groups. He will soon take up his appointment as CEO of Parks Victoria.

Jeff Nottle will give his PWP Report this evening and I want to thank his team for the fine submission they have put together to send to Infrastructure Victoria. It is excellent.

Margaret Hancock will present her Planning Report. Many of us are aware that there will presently come before Council, planning applications that can potentially impact adversely on the Island's natural environment. The Society may have a busy year.

Sue Saliba and volunteers have continued their great restorative work at Bayview Park. PICS was able to contribute funds for purchase of plants for this ongoing project.

The Phillip Island and San Remo Visitor Economy Strategy 2035 was adopted by the previous Bass Coast Council, with the strong message that the natural environment is the economy and must be well managed. The Rural Land Use Strategy and the Natural Environment Strategy have also been adopted.

Christine, John and myself attended the annual Council sponsored Bass Coast Environment get-together in Inverloch in October. It is always inspiring learning of the diverse projects and activities of the groups in the Shire.

In 2018 PICS celebrates 50 years since its formation in 1968 as a result of the concern that a Marina was proposed in the environmentally sensitive Rhyll Inlet. The lobbying, the campaigns, the representation and actions of the Society in the 49 years since, are now an important part of the Island's history.

Christine, Margaret and myself had our first meeting to commence work on the book titled: *Women in Conservation on Phillip Island*. It is planned that the book be launched next year on International Women's Day on March 8, as a significant event in the 2018 celebration on the Island of 150 years of Closer Settlement.

PICS now has car stickers with the appealing I Love Phillip Island. They cost a gold coin and are available this evening. These were on sale on the PICS Stall in the Town Square this morning.

The Society continues to host interesting speakers at its 4 general meetings each year.

I wish to thank St Philips for enabling the Society to have its committee meetings and events in the Hall.

In closing I wish to say how important your ongoing membership is to the Society. Not only the financial benefit of the membership but the committee's need to have that strength of numbers to justify PICS position on issues.

With the increasing visitation to the Island and the growing resident population, the impact of climate change and the sea level rise on our coastline, the Society's role will be even more important as a voice in any policy and potential development proposed that may compromise or endanger the Island's wildlife and its natural assets, now and into the future. PICS will continue to be heard. *Anne Davie*

2. PLANNING:

a) The Isle of Wight. Dare I say "Here we go again"! How many Isle of Wight proposals have gone to VCAT? How many hours have been spent sorting out the Porte Cochere, the parking of overnight buses, the disposal of rubbish, the arcade of superior shops? Let's hope that this time something really worthwhile and feasible is proposed, and let's hope it actually happens!

b) The Jetty Triangle. After seemingly endless discussion, the proposal for the Jetty Triangle has been accepted by the Bass Coast Shire Council. As is to be expected, there are loud complaints about lack of parking! But is there ever enough car parking for everyone everywhere? Cars aren't the only way of moving people at popular tourism destinations – we could be far more creative and positive in our thinking about this issue.

c) The Car Ferry. The Car Ferry has not gone away. We all need to be on the alert about this issue and to be ready for action.

d) The Hastings Container Port. Like the car ferry, the Hastings Container Port proposal has not 'gone away'. We are fortunate that the PICS "Preserve Western Port" committee just keeps working on this use, and will be reporting to this meeting.

e) Proposed three storey development in Thompson Avenue. PICS has objected to this 'over



development' proposal on the land adjacent to the Aldi store. Fortunately the application was rejected by BCSC, so we will be supporting the shire at the VCAT hearing.

f) Red Rocks Road. For the first time in many years, land suitable for residential subdivision is available in Red Rocks Rd. The two acre lot, formerly owned by the Hayes family, is rumoured to be the site of a 20 town house development. Any such proposal is alien to the neighbourhood character of the Red Rocks area, and should be vigorously opposed by PICS and the local residents and home owners. Town houses may have a place in central Cowes, but not in the outer areas.

g) Toscana Rise. When the original subdivision proposal for the area known as "Toscana Rise" was put forward, it was vigorously opposed by PICS at VCAT. The original proposal included housing development in the low-lying land adjacent to the foreshore, and the inevitable loss of some magnificent very old Banksias and other significant vegetation. This was a protracted VCAT hearing, the result saved the significant vegetation and kept the housing subdivision on high ground. We are now "watching this space" as rumours abound that, with a change of ownership, there may be another push for subdivision, and subsequent building, on the low-lying ground adjacent to the foreshore.

h) Rural Land Use Strategy. PICS made a long and detailed submission to the Shire's Rural Land Use Strategy for Phillip Island. This strategy was a real "Grab Bag" of ideas, and it was hard to find the basic direction behind it. We wait to see what happens next.

i) Airfield. The future use of the airfield land is by no means settled – except perhaps in the eyes of estate agents with a view to more houses! The airfield is just about in the centre of the area covered by the "Phillip Island & San Remo Design Framework". It's also an area readily accessible by the much improved public bus transport. Would the airfield be a good site for the proposed aquatic centre? If we really do need a much bigger recycling and green waste area, why not consider the airfield? There is a lot to consider, and much consultation is needed before the future of the airfield land is settled.

j) Proposed new Primary School adjacent to St Mary's Catholic Church. Some of you may remember – perhaps about 30 years ago – when St Mary's Church sold up its land-locked site in Chapel Street, and moved out to the "Tourism Precinct" which extended from Rhyll/Ventnor Rd to the southern boundary of the Golf Driving Range and the Wildlife Park. One of the reasons for moving was to enable opening a school. It has taken time, but the school is set to open in 2018. And that background information leads me to Blue Gum Reserve and Blue Gum Alley.

k) Blue Gum Reserve and Blue Gum Alley.

Blue Gum Reserve: The Blue Gum Reserve is much loved by lots of birds, lots of dogs and their companions, by croquet players, by scouts and guides and by the shire outdoor staff. It's also enjoyed by occasional 'frisbee golf' players. A tree planting program is underway – with varying success – the weeds are gradually being eliminated, the grass is cut. But what of the remnant indigenous herbs which were discovered? I hope that this year, PICS may allot funding so that the remnant indigenous herb area may be properly assessed and a maintenance plan implemented.

Blue Gum Alley: The rather rough road which provides a link between the industrial estate and the Rhyll Rd – designated "Emergency Vehicles Only" – interestingly, 'emergency vehicle' means a utility or van driven by someone who is probably going to or from home for lunch or dinner! The dust created by these vehicles is so bad that the bird counts have been abandoned as the birds have abandoned the roadside trees and vegetation now covered in dust. In 2001 BCSC resolved to close Blue Gum Alley to vehicular traffic. For whatever reason, this decision was never implemented, and now we have a dangerous situation, with vehicles being driven too fast, with no safe place for pedestrians, and with a school due to open next year! PICS has written to the Shire but I don't know if a response has been received. It seems obvious that either the intention of "Emergency Vehicles Only" be enforced, with appropriate barriers installed, or the road has to be properly surfaced and provision made for pedestrians and cyclists – and without dust, and with revegetation so that the birds and other creatures will return.

j) Phillip Island Nature Parks. As is well known the administration staff of PINP is moving into Cowes, and will be housed in the cultural centre building. This means that when the new Visitor Centre is built at the Penguin Parade it will be specifically designed for that purpose and not required to accommodate administration staff and offices, and, of course, it means a real "Nature Park" presence in Cowes.

Sometimes when writing about planning issues – trivial or big – it's easy to think: "Is this really worth doing?" The answer of course is "Yes". So I'd like to end with a positive example – a bit of ancient history from about 40 year ago when PICS members were among the volunteers who did traffic counts from Mandeville Rd out to the Nobbies, in order to prove that for the safety of the penguins traffic had to be banned from sunset to sunrise.

We'd each be given a section of road to patrol, a report sheet to fill – How many cars? Penguins? Foxes? Cats? Anything else? At the end of the session, we'd walk back and find Professor Mike Cullen crouched in his van, waiting for our response sheets. So that was the beginning. Eventually the road was closed. The the Nature Park was established. The

Summerland buy-back actually happened from 1985. And today we have a greatly extended Nature Parks. And much of all this was started with a simple planning issue – “Road closed from Dusk to Dawn”. *Margaret Hancock.*

3. PRESERVE WESTERN PORT

A busy year with less public profile, more strategic engagement with key stakeholders and key submission lodged with Infrastructure Victoria.

Jan. Meeting held with Mayor, Acting CEO and Environment manager on BCSC’s tepid response to Infrastructure Victoria & plans to seek views from wider stakeholders.

Feb. Presentation to Tooradin & Cardinia angling clubs on impact on fishing

20 Feb. San Remo channel challenge Gazebo and PWP signage sale of some merchandise & 300 PICS and PWP brochures included in show bags given to each contestant!

2 new PWP brochures: Fishing brochure & updated “The Threat has not gone away” which includes comments by Professor Kennedy on erosion and inundation including comments about 15 MCG’s full of dredge. 3,000 printed.

Involvement in community consultations for development of Council environment strategy.

In APRIL Radio Marinara 3RRR Western Port special: Jeff Nottle, Lisa & Alia Schonberg, Kevin Chambers, Karri Giles (WPPC) all attended studio and spoke on air about concerns.

PICS & PWP write to Minister about exclusion from community discussions on RAMSAR plan.

Involvement in RAMSAR consultations with key environment groups.

PWP present to Australian Asparagus Growers Council on 14 March on saline intrusion into aquifers if Port of Hastings dredging goes ahead. Based on scientific research of 1980 on dredging.

PWP invited to be part of meeting with Minister for Environment as part of 5 ministers’ visit to Bass Coast Council.

PWP handed individual letters to 3 Ministers including Minister for Tourism, Environment and Regional Development on port concerns.

PWP instrumental in assisting Council to hold “Port of Hastings Round Table Discussions” on 28 April. Key stakeholders attended and Agreed Principles developed that include no dredging other than maintenance and Port issues need to be considered by multiple Government departments.

During May media student interviews PWP and prepares 8 minute video documentary on PWP campaign: <https://youtu.be/uh6mQxC5eKQ>

PWP present to 8 fishing clubs around Western Port to explain impact on fishing. Many attendees purchased PWP fishing post cards to be sent to Minister.

PWP writes to Infrastructure Victoria supporting and enclosing Bass Coast Council Agreed Principles relating to the Port.

In May PWP released Media Release on how Port would adversely impact on recreational fishing.

PWP involvement in development of Bass Coast Tourism Strategy: Construction of a Port in Western Port recorded as a key risk to delivering the strategy.

10,000 brochures total including donations from fishing club pres.

Brochure holders made for the above and placed in retail premises from Cowes to Cranbourne. Stocked and maintained throughout the three years.

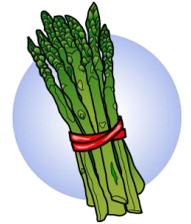
Council elections: No candidates for Bass Coast Council election supported the construction of a container Port in Western Port.

PWP has front page exposure in December in PI Advertiser.

In November PWP meet Infrastructure Victoria at community consultation forum in Hastings.

PWP prepares and lodges detailed submission to Infrastructure Victoria.

Infrastructure Victoria will report to Government draft recommendation and research findings in first quarter of 2017. *Jeff Nottle*



4. BARB MARTIN BUSH BANK

The Bushbank will soon be celebrating its 20th birthday. It continues to operate with the same energy and enthusiasm from the Island Environment Groups and the wonderful volunteers, as it did in 1998. Presently the Bushbank Committee has representatives from Birdlife Bass Coast, the Volunteers, PI Nature Parks, Newhaven Coast Action, Ventnor Coastcare, Rhyll Coast Action, Friends of the Koalas, Surf Beach Coast Action, PICS and of course includes the highly valued Coordinator, Jenny Toy.

The volunteers are the heart and soul of what has become an inspirational project, driven by the desire to improve the local environment and to leave a legacy for future generations. The Bushbank Christmas Party was held in December at Bimbadeen farm, so that the volunteers could see close up, how their hard work has transformed landscapes.

The Phillip Island Nature Parks provides the site, power and water as well as providing advice on call for the Bushbank. It is very fortunate to have this generous arrangement.

In 2016 Phillip Island Landcare had a plant order of 27,000 tubes but because of funding cut-backs to Landcare, this year's order will be much reduced. Retail sales continue to be healthy and there is now a greater need to be proactive in the promotion of indigenous plants in urban areas and in new housing estates.

It was with sadness that the Bushbank farewelled our esteemed Secretary and long-time committee member and volunteer, Max McConchie, last year. His dedicated commitment will always be remembered fondly.

The Friends of the Koalas have been once again been generous with their support and have recently purchased some much-needed new trolleys. This support is much valued.

5. FRIENDS OF KOALAS

In December the Phillip Island Nature Parks held a five year count across the island and a phone-in for koala sightings. Only 1 phone call was received and eight koalas were located in the woodland reserves, which confirms the continuing decline on the island. Numbers are also declining around Australia.

FOK continues to battle on with Habitat Days to try to maintain and improve habitat, including a Ragwort pull this morning. Loss of habitat is the main reason for the declining numbers. Habitat Days are held on the first Saturday of the month.

We also continue with monthly Koala Counts at the Koala Conservation Centre which currently has 24 koalas in residence. Next count is next Tuesday and 10 a.m. This is where we check on the woodland koalas. Unlike koalas, bird numbers at the KCC are very impressive. We conduct a monthly bird count during the Koala Count and average in excess of 30 species in two hours there – our record in 42 species in November.

FOK continues to lobby on matters affecting koalas and wildlife in general. We, like many groups, desperately need more volunteers.

2016 was a sad year for us with the death of our long-term treasurer Max McConchie in April.

Two trees were planted in his memory at Silver Spade Day in June at the KCC. On Silver Spade Day, donors of \$100+ to FOK's Habitat Fund plant a symbolic tree.

FOK's Annual General Meeting will be held on Saturday January 21st at the KCC at 2 p.m. The meeting will be followed by a stroll through the centre. All welcome. We have vacancies on our committee, and we especially need a Treasurer. We have copies of our latest newsletter here tonight.

Patsy Hunt.



6. FRIENDS OF CHURCHILL ISLAND SOCIETY

FOCIS has this year received Donor Gift Recipient status (for tax deductible receipts) from the Australian Taxation Office as a cultural organisation. This process took several years. We now have a Heritage Fund. FOCIS has commissioned boat model builder David Lumsden to create a 1:24 scale model of the *Lady Nelson* for us to display in Amess House. We expect the model to be 'launched' at a FOCIS event during February 2017. FOCIS is applying for two upcoming grants: one from the Public Records Office of Victoria (Local History grant) for signage for farm machinery, dairy equipment and for iPads in the house and cottages with scenes from life of the early settlers acted out by Offshore Theatre. And a second grant from the Phillip Island Community Benefit Fund for an extension to our historic farm machinery shed to allow for wheelchair accessibility and undercover viewing of the farm machinery. Recently Christine Grayden, our secretary, and David Maunders, our President, met with CEO Matthew Jackson and Project Manager Damien Prendergast, regarding the development of a larger building on Churchill Island to accommodate visitors and functions and a museum. This was a positive meeting. We look forward to a busy year. *Pauline Taylor*

7. RED ROCKS COASTCARE

Revegetation, weed control and cleaning up rubbish continued to be the focus of our working bees during the year. Again, we were well-supported by our faithful squad of volunteers, and I thank them wholeheartedly for their work. Volunteer numbers varied from 16 to 6 at our activities in 2016.

Plantings in June were directed at revegetating areas that in 2012 were infested with carpets of the serious weed, Blue Periwinkle, since well-controlled. At our main planting day, 380 plants were put in at 7 sites along the Firetrack, including replacement of a number of Moonah and Bursaria plants that had not survived in the tall wire guards. A week later, at a follow-up planting, 70 extra plants went in at two sites north of the carpark.

Blue Periwinkle seedlings continue to emerge in small numbers, and require regular monitoring and removal every 6 months or so. Our most recent check, in November, carried out by myself with work experience student, Jye Andersen, yielded 43 plants. Other target weeds continue to be Angled Onion, dealt with at our Sep working bee, thistles and Sea Spurge. Sea Spurge is well-controlled along the main beach at Red Rocks, with just the occasional plant emerging and needing to be pulled up. The previously heavily-infested dunes west of Justice Rd are also getting under control, with our November working bee able to completely clear seedlings from the whole area. It is very pleasing to have reached this stage considering only 3 years ago, the dunes were covered with that weed.

Cleaning up rubbish and old plant guards were addressed at working bees in Jan and April.

Thanks to Dave Martin, BCSC, for his encouragement, advice and support with provision of equipment, plants and rubbish removal during 2016. *John Eddy, co-ordinator*

8. SALTWATER CREEK COASTCARE

Saltwater Creek Coast Care has finished the year with some good progress in revegetation and some clean ups. We did further planting on the site adjacent to the west bank of the Creek (June, 15 volunteers) and hope to follow this up with further planting this year. We also did some replacement and top-up planting in the Coastal Banksia

restoration site (July, 9 volunteers). Thanks to John for help in providing plants for this job. As always it would be difficult to work without his assistance.

We had limited time for clean-ups last year, some due to weather, and some to personal commitments. I hope this coming year to run at least 2 clean-up days and one planting day. Planting will of course be subject to good rainfall in winter. *Kevin Harris, SWCC co-ordinator*

Addendum:

1. An attempt by Bass Coast Shire Council Natural Resources Officer, Dave Martin, to set up a Friends group to cover the Creek Reserve, inland of the coastal reserve, failed due to lack of support from the local community.
2. A recent inspection of the planting sites shows that the tall wire guards have been very effective in allowing Banksia, Bursaria and Coast Wattle plants to establish, free of wallaby damage. *John Eddy.*



9. FRIENDS OF SCENIC ESTATE RESERVE

The FOSER committee, consisting of John Eddy (coordinator and chair), Carmen Bush (minutes and publicity), Michael Whelan (new Councillor), Phil Wright (ex-councillor), Dave Martin (BCSC) and Samantha Coleman (PINP) has met at approximately 2 monthly intervals throughout the year.

The committee has reported to each PICS Committee meeting in 2016, and Newsletters were emailed out to our volunteers in Feb and August, the latter to celebrate FOSER's First Birthday on Sept 1st. They were well-received. I thank all the committee members for their on-going support.

Environment Minister Lisa Neville, officially opened Scenic Estate Conservation Reserve on Thurs 3rd March. The event took place at the viewing platform on the coast, with spectacular views across Western Port forming a backdrop on a mild early autumn morning. Following a welcome to country by Steve Parker of the Boon Wurrung Foundation, others to speak were BCSC mayor Cr Jordan Crugnale, Matt Jackson PINP CEO, Bradley Fauteaux, Parks Vic CEO and Harriet Shing, member for East Gippsland. A plaque on the viewing platform was unveiled and afterwards the 50 or so invited guests took the chance to network and enjoy the surroundings as they ambled back through the Reserve to the car park. A Clean Up Australia Day event was held at the Reserve on Sunday 6th March, with 8 volunteers participating. We ended up with 15 bags of rubbish, plus sundry large items and 5 bags of recyclables. Most of the rubbish was not recent, being relics of the years of misuse of 'Chinaman's'. All the bags and other rubbish were collected by BCSC a couple of days later. The event was organised and co-ordinated by FOSER committee member Michael Whelan. Thanks, Mike!

A FOSER working bee was held on Sunday 24th April, to cut Poa grass for laying on the banks of the main Wetlands created last year. This “thatching” helps to protect the soil, direct-seeds some grass, and creates an improved seed bed for other native species. It is, however, a labour-intensive process, and the 10 volunteers we had could not complete the task.

Year 9 students from Newhaven College came to our aid, however. Under the direction of teacher Brendan Kimber and the Shire’s Dave Martin, they spent several hours cutting and laying thatching on the Wetlands on the 12th May. Many thanks to the College.

Our Community Planting Day on Sunday, 26th June was most successful, with 10 volunteers braving the wet and the sticky mud to put in 350 plants, strengthening the planting around the main Wetlands, and starting the revegetation of some of the bare “Hoon” areas in the centre of the Reserve. During the morning, we trialled the use of the wonderfully-named Pottiputki planters, which allow rapid planting of plants from Hiko trays (smaller than standard tubes, and round) and are supposed to avoid the need to crouch down or bend over. (Sounds good for oldies!) However, they did not work so well in the very sticky clay we were dealing with, and most of our volunteers seemed to favour the more standard methods. On 22nd July, much to our dismay, strong winds damaged the iconic Butterfly sculpture. The “butterfly” section was detached from the “flower” section, but fortunately fell within the fenced enclosure. I was alerted, and visited the Reserve the next day, and picked up some scattered bits. The sculptor, DAK, later picked up the damaged section, and rebuilt it in a slightly altered form. The beautiful butterfly was reunited with its flower in the carpark during late August. During gales in Nov, the sculpture again blew down and is again under repair off-site.



Of the original 337 allotments in the Scenic Estate subdivision, 166 are still in private ownership. The Land Acquisition process for these blocks has recently passed some critical hurdles. The Scenic Estate Land Acquisition Report was on the agenda for the Council meeting on the 17th August, after the Council, in July, received government approval to compulsorily acquire the blocks through the Land Acquisition and Compensation Act. In 2015, Council had determined to pursue this course of action, and had set aside \$227,000 to fund it. The August 2016 Council meeting unanimously carried the recommendation that the land acquisition be completed, and authorised the CEO to make the necessary negotiations and arrangements. Great news indeed for the Reserve, after all these years! But the process could take many months, so we need to be patient.

The Council nominated Scenic Estate Reserve for a 2016 Tidy Towns award, which may seem at first glance to be a little ironic considering the Reserves history! However, there is a category - “Sustainable Communities/Protection of the Environment”- that fits us well. Judging took place on a very inclement day in July, but we were later notified that SER was in fact a finalist in that category, and a small presentation was made at the Reserve in Sept. The major awards ceremony in Oct saw us presented with a Highly Commended award.

The FOSER committee saw the need for a detailed Vegetation Management Plan for the Reserve as being a high priority. PICS contributed \$2500 to fund the project, with the Council adding a further \$500. We were fortunate to secure the services of botanist Kate Bennetts to draw up the plan. She was very familiar with the Reserve, having assisted the Council with parts of the Stage 1 development. Kate has completed a comprehensive species list, and a vegetation map, and hopes to finish the Plan during Jan 2017.

Directly to the north of Scenic Estate Reserve lies the Churchill Island Marine National Park, managed by Parks Victoria. Thierry Rolland, senior PV ranger for Western Port, is keen to establish more mangroves in the intertidal zone in front of the eroding cliffs of the Reserve’s coast, to try to slow down the erosion which is gradually destroying the valued Moonah woodland. He obtained several hundred mangrove seedlings, and a brief survey of the sediments at the site was done to determine suitable areas for planting, which took place in September. Further planting, using a direct seeding method being trialled, took place in mid Dec, with John Eddy and Jye Andersen planting 100 plants. Within 3 days, more than half had been demolished by some animal, probably shore crabs. 20 seeds were subsequently replaced, 10 in specially-made wire cages, which proved effective in preventing further losses.

At our working bee on 11th Sep, the 8 volunteers present worked on controlling Swamp Paperbark invading the newly-created small wetlands, then on setting up a trial testing the use of cutting and dabbing with Roundup on invading Swamp Paperbark on the margin of the native grassland areas. 10m plots at 4 different sites were used for this. A month later, some impact of the treatment was evident on well-established Swamp Paperbark several metres back from the cut line. This effect is known as “flashback”, referring to unintended consequences of herbicide application via the root systems of plants. Monitoring will continue.

On 22nd Sep, a hastily arranged working bee to control gorse, especially around the carpark, attracted 4 adults and 2 very enthusiastic and helpful children. *John Eddy*

10. CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES

Christine gave a brief Power Point presentation showing John Eddy's photos of some of the animals featured in the Animals of Oz presentation that morning. BCSC environment department continues to fund these two x hour-long presentations each summer, and they are very popular. There is no Environment Expo any more, so Animals of Oz is the only children's activity we are involved with now. *Christine Grayden*



11. HOODED PLOVERS:

Hooded Plover Watch is overseen by PINP's Daniel Lees. All information gathered is placed online on the "Hoodie Portal". As of this morning there were 10 active sites around Phillip Island including: Bella Vista (Cowes), Red Rocks, Anchorage, Elizabeth Cove, Smiths Beachcomber, Surf Beach, etc. *Maurice Schinkel*

12. PICS MARKETING:

Steve reported on PICS marketing initiatives for 2016 which included development and publication of an information brochure about PICS and a car (or folder, etc) sticker "I (love heart) Phillip Island". PICS now has a 25% discount from all PINP attractions upon presentation of your membership card. The PICS Face Book page is highly successful with 1225 page likes and many posts having a reach in the hundreds or even thousands. Christine updates the page several times a week and Lisa Schonberg often provides beautiful photos to put up. Christine welcomes information regarding environmental events to put up on the FB page. *Steve Angel.*

TREASURER'S REPORT:

Acting Treasurer Christine Grayden presented the Treasurer's Report (not audited) which was distributed to members for perusal and questions. "That the Treasurer's Report for the year 1.1.2016-31.12.2016 by accepted". Christine Grayden/Margaret Hancock. *Carried.*

ELECTION OF OFFICE BEARERS:

Patsy Hunt took the chair to conduct the election.

President: Anne Davie was the sole nominee and accepted.

Vice President: Pauline Taylor was the sole nominee and accepted.

Secretary: Christine Grayden was the sole nominee and accepted.

Minutes Secretary: Gillian Collins TBC

Treasurer: Vacant. Christine Grayden to be Acting Treasurer.

"That for 2017 there be seven ordinary committee members". Peter Fensham/John Eddy *Carried.*

Ordinary Committee Members: Margaret Hancock, Penny Manning, Jeff Nottle, Phil Wright, Steve Angel, Terry Nott and Lisa Schonberg were nominated and accepted.

Red Rocks Coastcare Co-ordinator: John Eddy was the sole nominee and accepted

Saltwater Creek Coastcare Co-ordinator: Kevin Harris was the sole nominee and accepted.

Friends of Scenic Estate Reserve Co-ordinator: John Eddy was the sole nominee and accepted.

Anne Davie resumed the chair.

"That subscription rates stay the same for 2018" Jeff Nottle/Pauline Taylor *Carried.*

AGM closed 9.35 p.m. Next AGM will be held on Saturday January 6 2018. Venue to be Parish Hall unless very hot weather when a different venue will be advised.

Phillip Island Conservation Society, Inc.

The Penguin Newsletter

March 2017

If undeliverable, return to:

PICS Inc.

PO Box 548

COWES, 3922

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL MEETING

7.1.17, Parish Hall, Cowes

The General Meeting followed the AGM. Present and Apologies the same.

Minutes of the Previous Meeting 24.9.2016 Christine Grayden/Pauline Taylor *Carried.*

Correspondence Terry Holman/Penny Manning *Carried.*

General Business:

1. Dates for 2017 General Meetings: 8.4.17; 8.7.17; 7.10.17

2. "That a letter be sent to Matthew Jackson, resigning as CEO of PINP thanking him for his wonderful service." Pauline Taylor/Phil Wright. *Carried.*

3. *Women in Conservation on Phillip Island*: Anne explained this project in more detail. PICS will apply for a BCSC community grant to print 80 copies of the book.

Meeting closed 10.05 p.m.

Photos this edition: Lisa Schonberg and John Eddy.