



**“The Penguin” Newsletter**  
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Newsletter: March, 2020

### Dates for Your Diary 2020

GENERAL MEETING: 5.4.20, 2 p.m. **POSTPONED** due to COVID 19 pandemic. We will re-schedule this meeting when the threat has passed and will notify PICS members and friends of details then. We plan to have Shana Bremner, BCSC waste/recycling education officer speak to us at the meeting.

WORKING BEE: Sunday 19 April. Scenic Estate Reserve. **POSTPONED** due to COVID 19 pandemic. Alternative arrangements will be made.

WORKING BEE: Sunday 14 June. 10 a.m. - 12 noon. Scenic Estate Reserve. Planting day - entrance and possibly elsewhere on the reserve.

GENERAL MEETING: 12.7.20, 2 p.m. Venue TBA - Dave Donnelly re Western Port's Bryozoan reefs

WORKING BEE: Sunday 16 August 10 a.m - 12 noon. Scenic Estate Reserve. Gorse control.

OPEN DAY, SCENIC ESTATE RESERVE: Sunday 27th September. To celebrate FOSER's 5th birthday! 10 a.m. - 12 noon. Meet at car park.

GENERAL MEETING: 27.9.20 2 p.m. Venue TBA - Ali Wastie Bass Coast Shire CEO

WORKING BEE: Sunday 8 November 10 a.m - 12 noon. Thistle control.

WORKING BEES: All equipment and morning tea provided. All meet at SER car park  
Red Rocks - Saltwater Creek Coastcare activities to be advised.

*If you would like to receive emails regarding forthcoming working bees please email us at [phillipislandconservation@gmail.com](mailto:phillipislandconservation@gmail.com) and we will add your name to our working bee email/phone list.*

**Enquiries:** Christine Grayden, ph 0400 900 612 e [phillipislandconservation@gmail.com](mailto:phillipislandconservation@gmail.com)

### Sub-committees of PICS:

**Red Rocks-Saltwater Creek Coastcare/Friends of Scenic Estate Reserve:** Co-ordinator for both is John Eddy, ph 0418 398 682 e: [johneddy1946@gmail.com](mailto:johneddy1946@gmail.com)

### Other groups:

**Friends of Koalas (FOK)** Contact 0419552385 OR 0484921028.

**Friends of Churchill Island (FOCIS):** email: [secretary@focis.org.au](mailto:secretary@focis.org.au)

**Bird Life Bass Coast:** President: Gil Smith [basscoast@birdlife.org.au](mailto:basscoast@birdlife.org.au) Secretary: Sue Woolley  
[basscoast@birdlife.org.au](mailto:basscoast@birdlife.org.au)

**Bass Coast Climate Action Network:** Michael Nugent, [BassCoastCAN@gmail.com](mailto:BassCoastCAN@gmail.com), 0416 039 933

### PICS COMMITTEE 2020

President: Jeff Nottle - media enquiries: m 0419 158 232

Vice President: Jane Jobe

Secretary: Christine Grayden, ph 0400 900 612 e: [phillipislandconservation@gmail.com](mailto: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, Anne Davie, Pauline Taylor

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

**LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT - JEFF NOTTLE**

PICS and our community are responding to the concerning spread of COVID 19 and the rise in infections. We are cancelling our General Meeting scheduled for 5 April. We are all monitoring the health warnings including practicing social distancing.



When the conditions are more favorable we will re-commence General Meetings and will reschedule speaker Shana Bremner, waste education officer, Bass Coast Shire Council. (Meanwhile keep up to date on our Facebook page and our website: [picsvictoria.org.au](http://picsvictoria.org.au))

This recent scare to our community arrives as we are starting to recover from the most devastating fires ever seen across our country. Lives have been lost, properties lost and an estimated one billion animals killed. ANU's Centre for Social research estimated that 2.9 million adults were directly exposed to the bushfires. The silver lining is that climate change and the environment is being discussed at all levels of Government, the media and in the community. Whilst we still have political road blocks the conversations are shifting our communities.

We need significant changes to face our challenges. PICS has responded to the current review of Federal Environment laws and provided a submission that the current law (EPBC Act) "has failed to protect species, habitat, water resources and natural places and is not up to the challenge of reducing Australia's climate pollution or assisting nature to adapt to climate change."

PICS has called for new Federal laws to replace the existing law. These new laws need to obtain outcomes that include ensuring the Federal Government assumes responsibility and leadership for reversing the decline in Australia's environment, ending destruction of primary, remnant, old growth or high conservation value forests and bushland, preventing the extinction of native fauna and flora, protecting key biodiversity areas, threatened ecological communities and threatened species including strict protection of critical habitats, substantially reducing Australia's greenhouse gas pollution, increasing carbon sequestration in biodiverse landscapes and coastal ecosystems, reducing air pollution, plastic pollution and chemical pollution and protecting Australia's wildlife, including marine life, from commercial exploitation.

We are continuing our Significant Trees and Vegetation register project in conjunction with the National Trust Bass Coast.

We encourage all members to practice safe health procedures for you and your family as outlined by our health authorities.

## **MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE PHILLIP ISLAND CONSERVATION SOCIETY INC.**

Cowes Heritage Centre meeting room, Cowes on Saturday, January 11<sup>th</sup>, 2020 at 7.00pm

**WELCOME & ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:** The President Jeff Nottle welcomed all members and acknowledged the Bunurong/Boonwurrung people and paid our respect to their elders past and present

**PRESENT:** As per attendance book (22 members)

**APOLOGIES:** As per attendance book (17 members)

PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT – Jeff Nottle.

2019 was a busy year for the PICS committee and the support we received from our members has been vital and much appreciated. We started the year with the PICS committee refining and adopting the PICS planning for the next 50 years. The PICS Next 50 Year Plan formalizes our thinking which is reflected in the Guiding Principles and Key Aspirations.

Our Next 50 Year Plan also identifies key risks with climate change being identified as the number one risk. Climate change is currently the most talked about issue in Australia as we commence 2020. I am personally optimistic that one of the outcomes from the devastating bushfires is to shock the current political culture into accepting the reality that climate change is real and present and that we urgently need climate policies, adaptations and actions.

This year we have all witnessed community backlash from the actions of Council in clearing almost all vegetation for the Cowes transit centre. PICS have taken strong community leadership and we have seen additional plantings and the momentum for Council to embrace the PICS initiative of establishing a Significant Trees and Vegetation Register for Churchill and Phillip Islands. We have partnered with the National Trust Bass Coast, held a very well attended public forum and established a community based panel to evaluate nominations. We have kept Council fully informed on the project and we will be making recommendations to them in March this year to provide on-going protection to our significant trees and vegetation. The project has been comprehensively and meticulously managed by Committee member Jane Jobe.

Our General Meetings have all been very well attended over the past year with key speakers including Council discussing the Distinctive Areas and Landscapes Legislation and Deakin University professor Peter Macreadie speaking on Blue Carbon in September.

The past year has also seen Christine Grayden as Secretary being the driving force of the organisation and her relentless contributions cannot be overstated. Christine contributes significant time and energy and we are all thankful for her valued contributions.

Anne Davie has been a great support and guiding light to myself and PICS. Anne and I have represented PICS on the Council Tourism Reference Group and the Nature Parks Community and Environment Advisory Committee. Anne has also represented PICS on the Totally Renewable Phillip Island 2030 Working Group.

Phil Wright has represented PICS on the Council Natural Environment Advisory Working Group and ensured issues aligned with our aspirations are included and actioned. Phil has also represented PICS at the Phillip Island Integrated Transport Strategy meetings.

Terry Nott has represented PICS on the Western Port Community Committee and has provided key input into concerns raised on proposed developments.

Penny Manning chairs our meetings and together with Margaret Hancock continues to monitor and provide input into key planning initiatives. Penny and Margaret are currently working with Council to streamline the Council referral process to PICS.

We have missed Lisa Schonberg during the year however we are all pleased that Lisa is now back on deck and will continue to represent our wildlife through her photographic lens (at right).



Pauline Taylor continues as our representative on Friends of Churchill Island Society and continues to provide wise council at our Committee meetings.

John Eddy has been very busy managing Red Rocks and Saltwater Creek Coastcare programs as well as representing PICs as the co coordinator of Friends of Scenic Estate Reserve.

Grazyna Mackiewicz has made excellent contributions during her first year on the committee. Grazyna has been the minutes secretary as well as providing reports from various forums including the Western Port Environment Research forum. Grazyna's research and analytical background has ensured that contributions have been made into PICs policies and submissions on key issues.

Protecting Western Port from industrialisation has been ongoing and Jane Jobe prepared excellent submissions on the EES process for AGL to follow and the need to ensure the Federal Environmental laws are included in environmental evaluations.

Together with Environment Victoria PICs attended the AGL AGM in Sydney. Using proxy nominations we were able to enter the meeting and directly advise the Board, senior executives and shareholders of our concerns regarding their planned gasification plant in Western Port and the likely adverse impact on the marine ecosystems that support our marine based economy.



PICs' ongoing efforts were widely recognised at the State level when we were awarded an Environment Victoria 50th Anniversary Community Environment Award. The award for significant long term contribution to conservation in Victoria recognises "***Resilience in the face of repeated attempts to destroy the local environment at Westernport***". The award also states "Your achievements serve as an example of what we can all achieve with courage and persistence"

I look forward to contributions by PICs to the ongoing and relentless efforts to conserve our natural environment. I trust

that 2020 will be the turning point that puts conservation and our protections of the natural environment on centre stage. PICs stands ready to react to adverse initiatives and lead our community in defending, protecting, conserving and enhancing our natural environment.

Jeff Nottle

OTHER ANNUAL REPORTS ARE IN THE DECEMBER 2019 NEWSLETTER

TREASURER'S REPORT – Matthew Ingham's report was presented in his absence by Christine Grayden

Christine Grayden presented the annual statement prepared by Matthew Ingham including assets and liabilities with copies for members to inspect.

"That the annual statement for the calendar year 2019 be accepted". Christine Grayden/Penny Manning *Carried.*

It was noted that in the report "Gorse" was spelt as "Gauze". To be corrected.

ELECTION OF OFFICE BEARERS: - John Eddy took the chair for the elections

The following were elected unopposed:

President - Jeff Nottle

Vice-President –Jane Jobe

Secretary – Christine Grayden

Minute Secretary - Grazyna Mackiewicz

Treasurer - Matthew Ingham

“That the number of ordinary committee members will be 7” Anne Davie/Margaret Hancock *Carried.*

The following ordinary Committee members were elected unopposed:

Pauline Taylor, Phil Wright, Lisa Schonberg, Penny Manning, Margaret Hancock, Terry Nott, Anne Davie.

Jeff Nottle resumed the chair

Red Rocks Coastcare Co-ordinator appointed – John Eddy

Saltwater Creek Coastcare Co-ordinator appointed – John Eddy

FOSER co-ordinator appointed – John Eddy

Friends of Churchill Island Society representative on their committee: Pauline Taylor.

#### MEMBERSHIP FEES for 2021

“That membership fees remain the same being: \$25 single; \$35 family; \$15 concession and that a Gold Membership be introduced in 2021 for \$200 per annum” Jeff Nottle/John Eddy. *Carried.*

The committee will investigate appropriate incentives for Gold Members.

Appointment of 3 signatories for the General Fund: Anne Davie, Christine Grayden and Jane Jobe are to be signatories. Any two to sign all cheques.



#### GENERAL BUSINESS:

1. Margaret Hancock raised the matter of Olive Justice Place pointing out that it is about 20 years since the land was purchased by the Commissioners for use as a green space with facilities for mothers to feed their babies and people to rest in a comfortable facility for free, which was Olive's intention for the land which had been her home for many years. Margaret had asked the question at the last council meeting. Maurice Schinkel was present and found the BCSC December 2019 minutes on his ipad which stated that "Olive Justice Place forms part of the Cowes Activity Centre Plan. This piece of work is presently in draft format and will be presented to Council in 2020. Community consultation with the Phillip Island community is also being planned which will help inform the future use of this important site. This consultation will occur in early 2020." (p.8)

Anne Davie pointed out that a number of years ago council appointed a committee to work on a concept for OJP and that a lovely plan was drawn up but apparently shelved. Penny reported that in the meeting with planner Donna Taylor, Donna had stated that action on OJP was proceeding.

2. John Eddy raised the matter of the old Blue Gum base log which was cut down for the transit hub and taken to Finding the Grain in Newhaven where it has been at the back of their driveway ever since with no definite idea forthcoming of what to do with it. When John talked to Mark Davis from Finding the Grain early on. Mark's idea was that being Blue Gum it was not really suitable for carving fine work with, but he thought could be milled then the pieces formed into a stand-alone shelving unit with spaces for small art works. Members agreed that this would be a good idea but wondered where it could go. Christine suggested the Koala Centre visitors centre may be a suitable location, being a forest environment with lots of Blue Gums not all that distant from the original site. Anne pointed out that the seeds from the old Blue Gum are being stored at the Barb Martin Bush Bank and could be propagated for a project. Members decided that we should approach Phillip Island Nature Parks with these ideas.

3. Pauline Taylor raised the matter of possible incursion by buildings into the Cowes Primary School sanctuary. We believe a master plan is being done for the school. PICS contacted Jordan Crugnale member for Bass to ask her to ask the minister to direct his staff to hold a public meeting to show the community the master plan for the school and discuss the future of the sanctuary. Due to turmoil created in the Region by the bushfires we do not expect to hear back from them for quite a while, but the state government made money available for the master plan and presumably that needs to be spent by end-June, so we should hear from the Education Dept in the first half of the year.

4. Phil Wright brought up the matter of this summer being the worst season for off-leash dogs on all beaches that he has known. He pointed out the advert for senior staff in today's Age from the Phillip Island Nature Parks stating that their aim was "to protect nature for wildlife and inspire people to act". This did not seem to be happening with regard to beaches they control and off-leash dogs. Anne stated that at the December PINP Community and Environment Advisory Committee, their Conservation Manager Jessica McKelson reported

that PINP has students on beaches this year studying the behaviour of humans around this issue and that she and Jeff will ask for a report as an agenda item for the next meeting. Christine reported that she had been corresponding with James Bremner, BCSC coordinator local laws and emergency management who reported rangers had issued 13 infringement notices up until 31.12.19. James had asked what PICS members thought about making Cowes East and Rhyll also off-leash beaches.

Members believed there had been no improvement in dog or dog owner behaviour on any Phillip Island beaches since the new regulations were introduced and that not enough of either monitoring or enforcement was being carried out by BCSC, nor had there been much public education around the new regulations for the council to consider new off-leash beaches at this stage. Members did not agree with Cowes East being an off-leash beach as dog walkers often did not leash their dogs at the sign indicating the end of the off-leash area and just kept walking. Members therefore feared that more off-leash dogs could end up at Observation Point and that no off-leash dog beaches should therefore be created in this area. Rhyll members in attendance expressed their alarm at their quite small beach being designated an off-leash beach. Maria Venn said that she frequented the beaches and saw that many dog owners on beaches did not pick up after their dogs had defecated and that children were playing in the affected sand, even though regulations around picking up after your dog have been in place for some years now. It was evident from this season that BCSC has so far not sufficiently financially resourced the enforcement of the dog regulations or the public education around them. Considering all of these points the following motion was passed:

"That PICS notify BCSC that we do not support or endorse any further off-leash beaches for Phillip Island"  
Anne Davie/Phil Wright. *Carried.*

5. Penny Manning reported that BCSC is no longer advertising planning applications in the local newspapers, but only online on their website at: <https://www.basscoast.vic.gov.au/building-planning/advertised-planning-applications> where you can search by town or the nearest town. ACTION Christine will put up a Facebook post notifying people of this process.

## LIFE MEMBERSHIPS

Jeff Nottle made Life Membership presentations to three PICS members:



a) Anne Davie "In recognition of community engagement, exemplary leadership and guidance". Anne, who is a long-term member who has had the roles of committee member, President and Vice President since 2001, responded by saying she had loved Phillip Island since she first holidayed here in 1949 and it had been her life's work to protect the island.

b) John Eddy "In recognition of practical leadership, mentoring and expertise in the field". John responded by saying he felt grateful in large measure but guilty a bit as

well because he could never have achieved all that he has without his team of wonderful volunteers. He recalled that his journey with PICS started in 1984 when he gave a talk in this room to the Phillip Island & District Historical Society and subsequently received a letter from PICS secretary Christine Grayden inviting him to join PICS as a group which fitted his interests. (Christine and John have now been married for 34 years!) John said that PICS had given him the framework to indulge his passion for the natural world, which stems from his childhood holidays being spent on the McFee farm at Rhyll. He has made great friendships within PICS and that PICS comprises a group of people acting together selflessly in a common cause.

c) Christine Grayden "In recognition of decades of conservation and outstanding Secretarial contributions". Christine responded by saying she was honoured to receive a Life Membership from such an extraordinary group. Her uncle Keith Grayden (who was a PICS Life Member) first got her involved with PICS in 1969,

grubbing gorse out at Swan Lake, and he had been her mentor in her early life. She said she accepted this Life Membership on behalf of all of the extraordinary PICS secretaries: Ken Pound, Coral Oswin (also a Life Member) and Margaret Johnson. Christine then read a poem she had written called "Thank the Secretary", which outlined in verse all of the jobs a modern secretary of PICS has to do.

Meeting closed 8.55 p.m. followed by supper and chat. Thanks to everyone who brought the delicious food.

The next Annual General Meeting will be held on Saturday 9th January 2021, 7 p.m.

## *Welcome to our new members...*

...and thanks to everyone who has paid their subscriptions for 2020, and made donations to our General Account and tax deductible Public Fund. It's not too late if you haven't paid yet. Just go to our website: [picsvictoria.org.au](http://picsvictoria.org.au) and click on the Get Involved tab. PICS currently has 81 members.

## **Coastcare report**

Note that Red Rocks and Saltwater Coast Care groups are now combined since their geographic areas are contiguous. The Co-ordinator is John Eddy.

1. The Sea Spurge was all removed from the Justice Rd dune site on 25/2. Only 42 plants found, having emerged in the past 3 months. Seed reserves now very low. (Photo shows the swathe of Sea Spurge at the start of the Spurgebusters program in Feb 2014.)

2. I did a quick survey of the RR area on 20th and 21st Feb and compiled a list of management suggestions for 2020. Key among these were:

- repair of track fencing and fences discouraging access to the dunes from the beach.
- cleaning up and landscaping the borders of the carpark, in a manner similar to the beds around the toilet embankment.
- possible planting in gaps in dune vegetation on the west bank using long tubestock



I presented a list of these suggestions to Dave Martin during an inspection he and I did of the RR area on 28th Feb. He agreed to act on them this year, and support our volunteers in helping to achieve these outcomes.

3. Blue Periwinkle, that terrible invasive and persistent weed, is still a problem for us at RR. The situation was not helped by me not checking on it during 2019, due to other commitments. So this weed has re-established in some limited spots. Most has now been dug up, following 4 hours 'penance' by me, and a working bee by a select team of 5 yesterday. Often, to get access to the plant, we have to cut away fallen branches, and the matted growth of Seaberry Saltbush, making the task a slow one. Some denser areas near the carpark will probably be left for contractors to spray.

*John Eddy, RRSWCC coordinator*

## **Friends of Scenic Estate Reserve (FOSER)**

1. The Stinkwort campaign continued apace during Feb and included a scheduled working bee on the 16th February, with 5 volunteers. By the end of the month, all known Stinkwort at the Reserve had been removed. Monitoring will continue for the next 2 months, to remove any stray plants in order to prevent any seedset again this year.

2. Our recent efforts to remove all the historic rubbish from the Reserve started last year, with a detailed survey and mapping of all the spots where rubbish remained from the habitual dumping that occurred in the 1960's to 2000's period of neglect prior to the creation of the Reserve. Most had been removed, of course, by the Shire, Nature Parks and Parks Victoria in 2014-15, indeed many truckloads of it, but some still remained hidden away in the scrub. (contd p8)

FOSER report continued...



Over the first 3 days of March, using our map from last year, I searched out this rubbish, and carried it out to 8 collection points on the tracks. At our scheduled "Clean Up Australia" event last Wednesday, 5 volunteers and Dave Martin (BCSC) picked up from these "depots", sorted out the recyclables, and filled Dave's ute with 16 bags of rubbish and recyclables, plus sundry other items. Larger items, including 6 truck tyres, a car wheel, and various car body parts, were left for a contractor with a truck. It was good to complete such a comprehensive clean-out. In many cases, the old bottles, jars and household items had sat there for 40 or 50

years. Photo: Karen, John A, David, Carmen, Shane with just a bit of the rubbish cleaned up!

3. We have plans this year to expand the planting at the Reserve entrance track north of the carpark. Preparation for that will include getting a contractor to deeply rip the heavily-compacted soil, and mulching.
4. Rabbits - BC Landcare network staff were spotlighting for a count of rabbit numbers during early March. As a result, rabbit baiting is proceeding now, but using an improved cage design to ensure exclusion of wallabies and Cape Barren Geese.
5. Feral cats - PINP staff set out a number of cat traps last Monday throughout the Reserve, and will monitor these each morning. I have not heard what the results have been so far. *John Eddy, FOSEr coordinator*