

# THE PENGUIN NEWSLETTER

PHILLIP ISLAND CONSERVATION SOCIETY



*We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the lands and waters on which we live and work. We pay respect to Community Elders and Respected Peoples of the past, present and future.*

## Presidents Report

### PICS 'For Our Future'

 *Thank you Laura Brearley* 

The PICS *For Our Future* program has been a stunning success - see latest report on Page 4.



Jeff Nottle, PICS president

PICS are more than delighted with the program developed and led by Laura Brearley and guided by an enthusiastic and talented Arts Working Group. PICS committee members Michelle Maes and Anne Davie were key program contributors from team PICS. Phillip Island and Bass Coast were engaged over many months with a series of events that culminated at the recent Eco Arts Celebration at ArtSpace in Wonthaggi. Laura and Terry are now taking a well earned break and we all benefit from the connections and energy created during this wonderful program.

### September General Meeting

#### Speaker Details

Phillip Island Nature Parks marine scientist [Dr Andre Chiaradia](#) will speak about the benefits of reducing light pollution on Phillip Island.



## SEPTEMBER 2023

### Diary Dates

#### 1. **General Meeting**

Date: September 24

Time: 2-4 pm

Chisholm Room,  
Koala Conservation Reserve.

Guest Speaker:


Dr Andre Chiaradia

#### 2. **Open Day at Scenic Estate Reserve**

Sunday 24 September

*Details, working bees p.10*

#### 3. **End of Year Picnic**

 November 19 -noon-4pm

The Gurdeys Winery

### Contact Us

**W:**

[www.picsvictoria.org.au](http://www.picsvictoria.org.au)

[www.facebook.com/picsvictoria](https://www.facebook.com/picsvictoria)


**E:**

[phillipislandconservation@gmail.com](mailto:phillipislandconservation@gmail.com)

**Secretary:** Bruce Wilson

**T:** 0414 236 765

**Mail:**

 PO Box 548, Cowes, 3922

**ABN**

48 392 256 921

**Incorp**

## **Invitation to PICS Members - End of Year Celebration for Conservation Groups-**

All PICS members are welcome to attend an end of year celebration with key conservation groups including PICS, South Gippsland Conservation Society and Save Western Port Woodlands.

Date: Sunday 19 November 2023

Time: Noon - 4 pm

Location: The Gurdies Winery

215 Gurdies-st Helier Rd, The Gurdies VIC 3984

[📍 https://goo.gl/maps/5MQZb3Vs8b3Vy23A9](https://goo.gl/maps/5MQZb3Vs8b3Vy23A9)



Light snacks and wine available by donation or bring your own drinks and picnic or use the BBQ. Bring some folding chairs and picnic rugs too.

### **Donations to PICS**

Whilst all PICS committee members are volunteers, PICS incurs expenses including insurance, venue hiring, equipment etc. Whilst PICS likes to keep membership subscriptions low for our members, PICS does welcome donations. We are most appreciative of every single donation and membership subscription. PICS thanks all contributors. Donations can be made at any time via PICS website and tax deductible donations can also be made.

### **Kitty Millers Bay Road “eco-tourism retreat” proposal refused**

In July, PICS [📍 submitted an objection](#) to a planning permit application to create a large accommodation development on Farming Zone land at 115 Kitty Millers Bay Road, Ventnor.

The proposal involved removing vegetated embankments to remodel the existing artificial wetland and constructing group accommodation for approximately 100 guests. The sprawling design comprised 31 buildings, including a main building of almost 11 metres in height, and a house, decks, tents, and swimming pool within the open wetland area.

The application demonstrated no understanding of the severe environmental damage caused by excavation to create the existing wetland in the 1960s, which removed topsoil layers, penetrated the clay capping over the saline water table, and flooded the wetland with highly saline water. In the 1990s, salinity levels within the artificial lakes were up to 150 percent of the salinity of sea-water. This salinity and exposed clay subsoil created ongoing difficulties in revegetating the site, and it took two decades to achieve a sparse, stable vegetation cover to protect the eroding embankments. Until this point, there was concern that the embankments could fail, causing unintended release of hypersaline water downstream to Swan Lake and lower burrows within adjacent penguin and shearwater rookeries.



### *Kitty Millers Bay Road “eco-tourism retreat” proposal continued*

PICS submitted that further excavation of this saline wetland would be extremely risky, that the proposal was a poor outcome when weighed against several aspects of the planning scheme and planning policy, and that the so-called “eco-tourism retreat” failed to demonstrate adequate standards of environmentally sustainable design.

We would like to thank the community members who took the time to write a total of 167 objections to this proposal.



Swan Lake

We also thank Bass Coast Shire Council for its decision to refuse a planning permit on the following grounds:

- The proposal is inconsistent with the objectives of local and state planning policy in relation to settlement planning in rural and coastal areas, protection of agricultural land for sustainable agriculture, environmental risks and amenity and rural landscape character.
- The proposal is not consistent with the purpose of the Farming Zone and does not satisfy the decision guidelines of the Farming Zone.
- The development would result in unmitigated risk to the environment.
- The proposed use and development does not achieve a net community benefit as the negative impacts on the environment and landscape and risk to sustainable agriculture outweigh the economic development benefits.

### **New Destination Management Plan in Development**

Destination Phillip Island is developing a new Phillip Island and San Remo Destination Management Plan, which will update the 2016 Visitor Economy Strategy. PICS committee members have attended workshops leading to the development of a [situation analysis](#). PICS and other participating community groups will contribute feedback on the situation analysis, which will help to inform the priorities and focus areas in the final destination management plan.

### **PILA Calendar of Events**

In addition to the dates of PICS events published in this newsletter, please also refer to the [Phillip Island Land Alliance calendar of events](#) for the activities of 11 of Phillip Island’s community environment groups, including working bees, field days, community meetings, and more.

## PICS Arts Working Group Report

September 2023 by Laura Brearley

### Exhibition Opening and Eco Arts Celebration at Wonthaggi ArtSpace



The *Ocean Messages Exhibition* opened at Wonthaggi ArtSpace with an Eco Arts Celebration on Sunday August 13th. The exhibition showcases artworks, photographs and creative writing from a Creative Message Exchange taking place across the oceans between artists, children and First Nation Elders in Bass Coast (Boonwurrung/ Bunurong Country), Norfolk Island and Turtle Island (Canada and USA). Susan Hall, a Lead Artist of the 'For Our Future' project curated the show.

Boonwurrung Traditional Custodian Aunty Sonia Weston welcomed people to Country, offering a leaf to grant safe passage through Country. Camille Monet facilitated a whale and shearwater headband activity using recycled and natural materials. John Gemmill, CEO Clean Ocean Foundation opened the Exhibition. Children from the Bass Coast Childrens' Centre led some singing and sign-dancing of environmental songs.

### Kids as Catalysts – Environmental Sculpture

Sponsored by 'For Our Future' within the Kids as Catalysts project, a group of Newhaven Primary School students worked with Helen Matthews to make an environmental sculpture called 'Rubbish Sucks.' Their sculpture was displayed at Dalyston Hall and the children made a presentation about the importance of caring for the environment.

Thanks to Michelle Maes for representing PICS and 'For Our Future' in supporting the students and the sculpture-making project.



*PICS Arts Working Group Report continued*

**Bass Coast College San Remo Library Exhibition and Incursion**

The 'For Our Future' exhibition is now showing in the library at Bass Coast College, San Remo as part of Childrens' Book Week. The theme for Book Week was 'Read, Grow, Inspire'.

Conservationist Ed Thexton was a guest speaker at the school for Book Week. We showed the new 'For Our Future' film about his work as a conservationist and then facilitated a conversation with a group of children and staff.



**BCAL Walk with Conservation Walk and Talk with Ed Thexton**

Ed Thexton led a group of Migrant English students and staff from Bass Coast Adult Learning on a Conservation Walk and Talk at Screw Creek, Inverloch.

Ed led the group along the Screw Creek Townsend Bluff Estuary Walk and up Townsend Bluff overlooking Anderson Inlet to the big manna gum tree, known in the community as The Grandmother Tree.

**Documentation**

An article about the event called 'Moments of Inspiration' has been published in the Bass Coast Post.

<https://www.basscoastpost.com/laura-brearley/moments-of-inspiration>



Film - Ed Thexton: Conservationist in Profile

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XNIZobjAygQ&t=24s>

Film - Aunty Sonia Weston: Cultural Educator and Dancer

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1MRURO6Q-Nc&t=20s>

We have made two Photostories about children inspiring environmental stewardship in Inverloch. Here is an image from tree-planting on National Tree Day with Inverloch Childcare, an initiative led by Ed Thexton and John Cuttriss.

## PILA (Phillip Island Land Alliance)

*Report written by Carmen Bush*

The first of two Cultural Heritage field-based workshops, hosted by PILA, was held 13th July 2023 at Cape Woolamai with staff from the Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation.

Dr Fleur King, Archaeologist and Heritage Advisor described the dramatic and significant changes in the local geography over the ages, using maps and timelines to demonstrate the main points.

Uncle Trevor Kelly (pictured right) used his storytelling skills to describe how land management and tool making skills sustained Aboriginal life “on country”. He and Fleur provided a wonderful display of artifacts and demonstrations of how they may have been made. One of our attendees had in their possession a suspected artifact which was later handed to Land Council Staff.

This workshop was well attended by PILA member groups. Talented Laura Brearley from PICS took photos and compiled her photos and others to create a Photostory which can be viewed on the PILA website under:-

Resources-Cultural Heritage Millowl

[🔗 https://www.phillipislandlandalliance.org.au/cultural-heritage-millowl](https://www.phillipislandlandalliance.org.au/cultural-heritage-millowl)

Recommended links, as per below, to more information are also on the PILA Website.

[🔗 https://www.firstpeoplesrelations.vic.gov.au/aboriginal-places-and-objects](https://www.firstpeoplesrelations.vic.gov.au/aboriginal-places-and-objects)

[🔗 https://achris.vic.gov.au/#/onlinemap](https://achris.vic.gov.au/#/onlinemap)

PILA gratefully acknowledges funding support from Bass Coast Shire Council Community Grants.

The second workshop occurred on September 7 at Rhyll.



## **Totally Renewable Phillip Island (TRPI)**

TRPI has a new focus on Renewable Energy and we are encouraging interested people to join the TRPI Clean Energy Group.

Most recently, a forum was held on September 5th @ PICAL 'Electrify Everything, Yes We Can!'



[🔗 https://events.humanitix.com/electrify-everything-yes-we-can](https://events.humanitix.com/electrify-everything-yes-we-can)

As we reported recently, TRPI has sharpened our focus on renewable energy, battery storage and increased energy production, as this is an area of great interest to many people. We saw this with the interest of over 100 households who signed up for the Tariff Trial utilising virtual community battery storage in the PICES Ausnet Battery. Unfortunately this project to develop new tariffs in conjunction with householders could not proceed as there was no interest by energy retailers to participate in the project. The project was terminated in May this year in a joint decision with project partners, DECCA, EICo, Mondo, TRPI & BCSC. Funding for the project was through the state government's Neighbourhood Battery Initiative (NBI) grants program.

A second grant through the NBI funding was also secured, led by TRPI & EICo, and this was to investigate the feasibility of pole top batteries at 10 locations on Phillip Island. Phillip Island Neighbourhood Batteries on the Low Voltage Network Feasibility Study (Oct 2022). This feasibility study was completed in 2022 and the paper, along with other studies commissioned by TRPI, is on the TRPI webpage at the link. [🔗 https://totallyrenewablephillipisland.weebly.com/reports.html](https://totallyrenewablephillipisland.weebly.com/reports.html)

### **TRPI Partners**

One of the key roles TRPI plays is facilitating a network of community groups, businesses, schools, local government & statutory authorities in a bimonthly online meeting where Partners are invited to share their goals, targets, & progress to reduce emissions, and the programs in place to achieve this.

### **New Partner joins TRPI**

We are delighted to welcome the Phillip Island Community Orchard which has recently joined us as a Partner organisation. We look forward to hearing their story online at a TRPI Partner meeting in the future.

TRPI is actively seeking new people & organisations to join us and continue to support the community in the transition to a totally renewable future.

### **Contact us by email to join the TRPI movement:**

[✉ totally.renewable.phillip.island@gmail.com](mailto:totally.renewable.phillip.island@gmail.com)

or call **Mary Whelan 0408 055 867** or **Neroli Raff 0429 384 020**

*Anne Davie*

# Outdoor Working Group Report June - August 2023

Meg Anderson, PICS volunteer coordinator

The Outdoor Working Group have had a very productive Winter season 2023, running 5 successful working bees while the weather was conducive for both weeding and planting.

Many thanks to our wonderful volunteers who have already contributed 238 hours of their time at working bees so far this year - you are certainly making a positive and lasting difference to our island's natural environment - restoring habitats which provide for our beautiful wildlife!

We are most grateful to John Eddy for his continued support and efforts in organizing all the plants, tools and other equipment for our working bees!

## What's been happening at Scenic Estate Reserve?

Coordinator: Jan Fleming

### Slippery Boardwalks:

PICS has been in contact with BCSC regarding the slippery boardwalks, especially those that are shaded. In July, Council treated the timbers and installed several small signs on the edges warning of slip hazard. They will monitor the situation and do further treatment if required. We have asked for more prominent signs.



### FOSER WORKING BEES

We have completed four working bees over the winter months.

#### 1. Planting:

At our annual planting morning on 2 July, a wonderful group of 9 volunteers did a sterling job to dig holes, plant and guard 150 local indigenous species to revegetate 3 sites where Council and PINP had previously removed invasive species such as Bracelet Honey Myrtle (*Melaleuca armillaris*) and Coast Wattle.



Plantings near the entrance

Many thanks to John E, John A, Jan, Carmen, Janet, Tony, Judy, Ineke and Ken for all your hard work planting!



Volunteers relaxing at morning tea time!



## 2. Weeding

At our 2 weeding working bees in August, small teams of enthusiastic and hard-working volunteers removed scores of prickly gorse plants near the car-park and scattered throughout the grassland in the SW corner of the reserve.



Many thanks to John E, Jan, John A, Carmen, Judy, Meg, Viva, Chris, Merly, Penny and Karen.

John Eddy's new method of attacking the very dense prickly gorse bushes using a mattock to initially expose the stem then cutting and dabbing at ground level, has proven to be very efficient and effective. A huge thank you to Chris and Viva who returned in late August to continue the removal of gorse in SW corner of reserve!



August to continue the removal of gorse in SW corner of reserve!

### ***What's been happening at Red Rocks Saltwater Creek?***

*Coordinator: Nick Stephens*

We have completed 2 successful planting events this winter - one at Red Rocks and one at Saltwater Creek

#### **1. Planting at Red Rocks**

In June, eight volunteers braved the windy and at times wet conditions and worked hard to plant and guard 150 local indigenous species of ground covers, grasses, shrubs and small trees in the foreshore reserve and along the fire trail.

Many thanks to the planting team: Nick, John, Bruno, Greg, Marilyn, Maurice, Sam and Meg.



## 2. Planting at Saltwater Creek

On 30 July, we held a major planting morning on the south bank of Saltwater Creek - in a patch of slashed tall wheat-grass plus infill planting at two locations within the Community Planting Site.

In 2 hours, a large team of 19 volunteers dug holes, planted and guarded **180 local indigenous plants!**

Many thanks to our wonderful planting team: John, Jane, Steve, Greg, Karen, Sue, Patricia, Maurice, Josephine, Sharon, Andrea, Sue, Bill, Josanne, Kim, Stefan, Oscar, Alanah and Meg.

The Planting Team



Three guard types were used depending upon the species - wire, carton, and new biodegradable cardboard ones.

★★★ **UPCOMING OPEN DAY & WORKING BEES - SAVE THE DATES** ★★★

### WORKING BEES

We'd love to see you at our working bees.

All Working Bees are held on Sundays 10 - 12 noon, followed by morning tea.

Bring a bottle of water and dress for the weather with sturdy shoes.



### FOSER:

**SUNDAY 24 SEPTEMBER** - Annual Open Day

**SUNDAY 5 NOV** - Weed control : Thistles and Gorse

### RRSWC:

**SUNDAY 15 OCTOBER**- Weeding at Red Rocks (note change of date)

## Committees

### SUB-COMMITTEE OF PICS

Red Rocks Saltwater Creek Coastcare (RRSWC)&

Friends of Scenic Estate Reserve (FOSER)

Volunteer Coordinator: Meg Anderson Ph: 0401 370 406

Email: [meganderson213@gmail.com](mailto:meganderson213@gmail.com)

### OTHER GROUPS

Friends of Koalas (FOK) Contact: Ph:0419 552 385 or 0484 921 028

Friends of Churchill Island (FOCIS):

Email: [secretary@focis.org.au](mailto:secretary@focis.org.au) Bird Life Bass Coast: President: Gil

Smith 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) Ph: 0416 039 933

### PICS COMMITTEE 2023

**President:** Jeff Nottle - Media enquiries – Ph: 0419 158 232

**Vice President:** Jane Jobe

**Secretary:** Bruce Wilson Ph: 0414 236 765

**Email:** [phillipislandconservation@gmail.com](mailto:phillipislandconservation@gmail.com)

**Minutes Secretary:** Carmen Bush

**Treasurer:** Matthew Ingham

### Committee:

Dr Laura Brearley

Penny Manning, Terry Nott, Phil Wright, Anne Davie,

Meg Anderson, Michelle Maes., Sharyn Cornthwaite

Pauline Taylor

The Committee meets at 9.30 am on 1st Saturday month

## Membership

We invite you to join PICS or renew your membership for 2023 if you have not already done so.

 <https://picsvictoria.org.au/become-amember/>

or contact us via phone or [email](mailto:secretary@picsvictoria.org.au)

*New members welcome!*



## Membership

If you like the work we do, why not become a member? By becoming a member of PICS, you help us continue our mission and in return, you will also receive these great benefits:

- Get 25% off entry prices to all Phillip Island Nature Parks including the Penguin Parade
- Receive “The Penguin” quarterly newsletter
- Invitations to exclusive presentation by expert speakers on planning, wildlife, environment
- Access to advice on planning and environment matters that may effect you
- Opportunities to help the environment through volunteering days.
- Be part of a like-minded community making a difference
- Public Fund donations are tax deductible.

### ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FEES

Single Membership - \$25

Family Membership - \$35

Concession Membership - \$15

Gold Membership - \$200

Or just donate to the Public Fund.

**To become a member or to donate, go to our website and click on Become a Member**

<https://picsvictoria.org.au/become-amember/>

You can also download a form from the website or contact secretary, Bruce Wilson Ph: 0414 236 765 or Email: [phillipislandconservation@gmail.com](mailto:phillipislandconservation@gmail.com)



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