



McCrae Homestead Coastal Group Inc.

A0035176R ABN 84 215 491 899

Caring for the local environment

Newsletter Summer 2016

Welcome to the McCrae Homestead Coastal Group Newsletter; Summer 2016.

End of Year Lunch

Don't miss the end-of-year lunch for all members next **Sunday 11th December.**

In a change from the usual format, this year it will be held at the Robinson's, 6 Burrell Street, McCrae, following the working-bee: about 12.30pm for those who are unable to work on the foreshore that morning.

Please bring a plate of food to share. Tea & coffee makings will be provided.

RSVP Dee on 5986 2909 or 0408 302 636 so she can co-ordinate the catering.

President's Report 2016

Welcome to the 19th AGM of our Association.

At a local government level, we have recently voted in 8 new councillors, so we hope we don't have to fight the same issues that were so contentious with the previous council- e.g.: the pool on the foreshore, Rosebud Foreshore Master plan etc. We need to remain vigilant for old bad ideas getting a re-run.

At a state government level, the Andrews government is half way through the production of a new Marine and Coastal Act to replace the Coastal Management Act 1995. At the recent community consultations DELWP Officers described the CMA as deficient in offering the best protection for our coastlines and particularly the Bay - they pointed out that the CMA is largely silent on the Bay, the 2000 sq. kms of water surrounded by and affected by what happens on the coast. The new name – Marine and Coastal Act reflects that change of focus. The Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988 is also under review – and it is hoped that the impacts of humans, native vegetation removal, mismanaged “controlled” burns and removal of the 5% target for public land to be burned every year, will all be considered as part of guaranteeing a future for our flora and fauna.

Turning to the local scene:

Works on the Coburn Creek by contractor Sue Di Iorio are progressing to plan, and are nearing completion. On November 6th we assisted in planting the west bank of the creek with plants provided by Sue.

This year we received a \$4,000 grant from MPSC to remove woody weeds at the narrow section of the Reserve at Anthony's Nose. We plan to start this work early next year.

Office Bearers:

President: Len Warfe 5987 2537
Secretary: Margaret Wilson 5986 4159

Treasurer: Barry Robinson 5981 2909

PO Box 29, McCrae Vic 3938 Email info.mccoastalgrp@bigpond.com Website www.mccraecoastalgroup.org.au

Membership

This year we have welcomed 4 new members: Felix Fuller- Jackson; Helen Ryan; Heather Lyon and Yvonne Davey. We farewelled Rachel Anderson who moved to Queensland.

Working Bees

We didn't do any tree planting in 2015, but in May this year we planted trees near the Rotunda, the toilet block and further east along the track.

During October, to our dismay we came across some severe damage to juvenile new She oaks and Banksias opposite about 595 Pt. Nepean Rd. they had been growing well and some had reached around 2 metres height. Margaret Wilson photographed the damage and the images are in our latest newsletter.

In July, Dee offered to provide hot soup and muffins for our after work lunch, and since then it has become a welcome addition to the morning's activities. Sometimes it has been in the rotunda and sometimes at Barry and Dee's home- so thankyou Barry & Dee on behalf of the group for your hospitality and support.

This year we have worked 22 Sundays for a total of 320 hours. Last year we worked 19 days and clocked up 260 hours. Our new members, and maybe the soup, have contributed to a significant increase in hours worked - so more weeds out and more trees in. A great outcome for our foreshore.

The highest attendance was our first day back on 7th February 2016, when 11 attended, and the lowest was last Sunday when 3 attended.

Other issues

Margaret Wilson has been our Secretary this year, and has oversighted our website, and produced excellent newsletters throughout the year. Thank you Margaret

Naturelinks continues to be the MPSC's supervising contractor overseeing our works on the foreshore, led by Danielle Suffern. Tess Graham alternates with Danielle between our week 1 and 2 sessions, and they also do other works on the Reserve – spraying etc. - as part of their normal work schedule.

We have received 2 grants this year for works on the foreshore, one from Melbourne Water, and one from MPSC.

Late last year Council agreed to install a bike cavaletti on either side of the road into the beach car park, aimed at slowing cyclists and pedestrians on their approach to the Pedestrian crossing on the road. Council had initially proposed quite severe cutting back of mature vegetation to supposedly improve visibility on approach to the road. After a meeting with our group's representatives, Council agreed that they had no data on any incidents for the area, and that the cavaletti was a suitable low impact response.

So, as always I thank you all for your dedication to our special section of our coastline. Congratulations to you all.

Our efforts are often commented on by the numbers of walkers who pass by when we work there, and I'm sure you agree there is great satisfaction in giving back something to the environment.

May we keep it up for a long time to come!

A copy of the report will be uploaded on to the website within a few days.



Mapping the changing coast in Port Phillip bay

Neil Blake, OAM, Port Phillip Baykeeper, was the guest speaker at the AGM in November. The following is a brief summary of his presentation:

Channel deepening and climate change plus an increasing human population and expected rise

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in sea levels means increased survival problems for animals & birds.

What goes on in the suburbs of Melbourne – i.e. run off from storm water drains for one, incrementally impacts on Port Phillip Bay.

The shoreline character around Rosebud is sandy and very erodible.

Middle Park is seeing the effects of wave action on the breakwater built for the 1956 Olympics making the beach vulnerable. Oyster catchers are breeding on the breakwater but (inadvertent) interference by humans meant the nest was not viable this breeding season and other aquatic animals are also under stress.

Beach renourishment work is being done but there does not appear to have been much in the way of environmental studies done on the effect and it was good to see that a bivalve returned about a month after the work was completed.

Clifton Springs has had a hammering from the sea and at St Leonards a cliff collapsed; both are being managed to keep them safe.

There are about 1300 penguins at St Kilda now – a large colony, more usually about 200 – 400 birds. There is great community support - 200 people contribute about 50 hours per annum to a heavy metal study on three penguin colonies. The St Kilda penguins were found to have elevated lead, arsenic and mercury from the Yarra River dredging compared before & after the creation of “the bund”, but interestingly that does not seem to have had great impact on their breeding. One answer would be that penguins excrete toxins through their feathers and moult.

There does not appear to be any meaningful studies being done on fish health (check on heavy metals) - no funding is the main problem. Dolphins are problematic to monitor as they are more difficult to catch.

There is a limited study of Seabed molluscs. They are playing a key role turning nitrogen into gas and returning it to atmosphere. Schools and community groups are doing live mollusc surveys of strongholds scattered around the bay. These surveys are being undertaken in the sandy bed areas; other studies have been concentrated in rock pools.

Beach profiling recording water levels on the beach continues and McCrae beach will be checked again shortly.

It is estimated that 90% of litter from catchments is plastic, and micro-plastic pollution (small/tiny pieces of plastic from packaging, including bottle tops) is the worst type of pollution as it is not captured in litter traps. It would appear that education will be the only way to address this problem. A Federal enquiry into marine plastic litter recommended that plastic bags should be banned and a deposit refund should be introduced across the country. But it is not known what enthusiasm there is in the States and Territories for the recommendation.

You can follow the work Neil is doing at his website - : <http://www.bay-keeper.com>



Office Bearers

Office bearers elected at the AGM are:

President – Len Warfe

Secretary – Margaret Wilson

Treasurer – Barry Robinson

Committee Members – Dee Robinson & Graham Rose.

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Workshop with Natural Systems Team

Several workshops for members of 'friends' groups have been conducted by the Natural Systems Team throughout the year.

They have been designed to give hands-on knowledge of the indigenous plants we have growing in our local areas.

The last one, **Seed Collection of Indigenous Plants** was held 'in the field' at the Briars Wildlife Reserve and was both interesting and educational, adding greatly to my scanty knowledge.

It is hoped that similar workshops will be offered next year. They are open to any member of a 'friends' group and information about them will be passed on as it comes to hand.

Membership Reminder

Annual membership subscriptions were due in November. You can download a renewal form from www.mccraecoastalgroup.org.au complete it and send with your remittance to PO Box 29, McCrae.

Population Growth

If you are interested in population growth, you might like to look at this movie, 'Growthbusters': <http://www.cultureunplugged.com/documentary/watch-online/play/12464/GrowthBusters--Hooked-on-Growth>

Runs for about 53 minutes.

More Information

For any information about the Group contact one of the Committee members listed below.

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Rainfall in McCrae

Year	Annual
2005	640.50mm
2006	466.50mm
2007	756.50mm
2008	602.75mm
2009	614.00mm
2010	934.50mm
2011	843.00mm
2012	959.00mm
2013	854.50mm
2014	652.55mm
2015	631.50mm
2016	737.50mm (01/01 to 30/11)

At a total of 94.50mm, it was the wettest October since 2010 when 105.50mm was recorded for that month. So, no wonder everything has grown like mad!

Working Bees

Working Bees - First and second Sunday of the month except January - 10.00am at the Rotunda.

Just turn up!

Volunteers do need to be a member of the group and registered with the Shire but this can be done on the day. You will be provided with gloves, safety glasses, sun hat, safety vest and tools.

Don't Forget the End of Year Lunch

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Merry Christmas and
Happy New Year!