



McCrae Homestead Coastal Group Inc.

A0035176R ABN 84 215 491 899

Caring for the local environment

Newsletter Autumn 2018

Welcome to the 2018 Autumn issue of the newsletter.

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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	773.50mm
2017	673.00mm
2018	to end March 79.50mm

Wasn't it just great to hear the rain on the roof and see the rain gauges and tanks fill up in early March. It has been a beginning to the year that's for sure. In February, my gauge registered only 10.5mm which was the lowest reading since 2009 when we only registered 4mm for the whole 28 days – a far cry from the 155mm registered in February 2005!!

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NETWORK DAY

On 3rd March, several members of the MHCG attended the 2018 Friends Network Day held at Mornington Park which included sailing on the

WORKING BEE ON SUNDAY 15th APRIL

Don't forget we are holding an extra working bee on **Sunday 15th April**. Same time. Same place. See you there.



Catamaran "Pelican 1" in either morning or afternoon.

In the middle we were treated to a scrumptious lunch during which great networking took place and Jeff Weir, Executive Director of the Dolphin Research Institute (DRI), spoke to us about the work that is being done by the Hastings based DRI.

He mentioned that the numbers of Humpback Whales visiting Port Phillip Bay is increasing; the

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same animals returning year after year. Also, that Killer Whales and Southern Rights are regularly sighted off Cape Schank.

A family of 30 Dolphins call the waters off Mornington home – and we did see them on the afternoon cruise.

Unsurprisingly, pollution causes the most threat to all the wild marine life in Port Phillip Bay, Western Port and along the south/east coast of Victoria.

Over 27 years the DRI has operated the ‘i sea, i care’ School Ambassador Programme, Scientific Marine Research, and other education programmes along with a more recent shore-based research programme at Rye.

After lunch, and aboard the “Pelican 1”, we cruised south out of Mornington Harbour to anchor off the coastal reserve of Fossil Beach Historic Area – approximately 15 hectares of undulating, heavily vegetated ground.

Here we learned that this site retains evidence of Aboriginal use of the coast in the form of shell middens. Also ruins of the 1861-1864 *Patent Septaria Cement Company* works built by Melbourne Architect, James M Robertson, which includes two kilns, wash mill and settling tanks, stone lined well and storage tanks along with evidence of other stone buildings and structures. The site retains remnant native vegetation of the Coastal Headland Scrub EVC.

The area is also of significant historical interest because of the valuable exposed and concealed fossil deposits along the sea cliffs and foreshore, although degraded in recent years by enthusiastic amateur fossil-collectors and excursion groups.

The formation of the cliffs at Fossil Beach is amazing. Here you can see the layers of ancient Baxter Sandstone (5,000 years old), Marina Cove Sand (10,000 years) and Balcombe Clay (15,000 years). It was the Balcombe Clay which James Robertson extracted as a source of lime for his cement making.

We sailed on as far as *The Pillars* at Mount Martha, but nature then intervened, and our afternoon cruise was cut short due to the inclement weather.

The wind so strong that we were almost blown away when climbing back up the path from Mornington harbour.

However, it had been a most educational and interesting day and we thank the staff of the Natural Systems Team who worked hard organising it for us.

[Information in this article has been gleaned from notes taken on the day, a DRI newsletter and a summary section of the Fossil Beach Cement Works Heritage Study 2011. The Editor takes full responsibility for any errors.]

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A MESSAGE FROM CR DAVID GILL **Red Hill Ward Councillor**

Why Keep the Mornington Peninsula Rural?

People who talk to me would love to protect the future of the Mornington Peninsula from urban sprawl and insensitive development.

The Peninsula has a split of 70% rural/agricultural to 30% residential/commercial zonings. The Green Wedge and urban growth boundaries maintain this in our planning laws. However, we are threatened by a projected increase in Melbourne’s population from 4 million to up to 10 million people within just a few decades.

This will create even more pressure on governments by the powerful development industry to erode the local urban growth boundary and may lead to larger housing developments on the Peninsula and the loss of important agricultural areas.

Why should we protect the Peninsula?

Feeding the booming city from nearby rural zoned areas is essential. We are already losing this prime agricultural land to those pursuing unproductive rural life-styles and inappropriate tourist developments. This then applies pressure to prices and leads to less available farmland.

It is obvious that we will need to increase our output from the already substantial \$1.1 billion local food bowl in order to support Melbourne’s growing population. Melbourne simply cannot

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afford to lose any more nearby prime agricultural land.

Of course, we also don't want to lose the many other rural and environmental values that we appreciate.

How do we accomplish this?

Mornington Peninsula Shire Council (MPSC) has released its Green Wedge Management Plan for public comment and finalised its local Housing and Settlement Strategy for State Government adoption.

The strong attendance at the recent council series of town planning public meetings has prompted the MPSC to take these planning issues to the population of the city of Melbourne and to all Members of Parliament through an ongoing advocacy and advertising campaign. Thank you to all of those who came and voiced their concerns.

The MPSC advertising campaign will promote rural and village aspects of the Peninsula as essential to Melbourne on many levels.

Most Melbournians visit the Mornington Peninsula and they are the target audience of the campaign. We don't have swinging electorates here, but they do, and we hope that politicians will listen to them.

The message is clear...

"Don't expect us to build more suburbs on the Mornington Peninsula and don't force urbanisation onto us."

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UPDATES

Grants:

MHCG has submitted applications for grant funds for removing weeds and replanting from Coast Care Victoria Community Grants and the On-Ground Community & Volunteer Action Grants. It will be some weeks before we hear if we have been successful.

QR facility at the Rotunda

At this stage there is nothing further to report.

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Car Parking on foreshore

Jenny Warfe & Margaret Wilson met with Hannah Brown and Clayton Fenech from the Shire, to discuss placement of bollards and rocks to deter car parking in inappropriate places along the McCrae foreshore. We can report that the missing bollards have all been replaced and we have agreed on where the rocks should be placed, and a section of fencing repaired. This work will be carried out by the Shire in due course.

Library Meeting Room Bookings

We are really pleased to tell you that after conducting a review of the charges imposed on groups holding meetings in the Library Community Meeting Rooms, Councillors determined to abandon the insurance charge for not-for-profit groups. MHCG was not affected by this but other groups were, and they have had the insurance levy paid since last July refunded. It's taken some time, but it is pleasing to see that good sense finally prevailed.

FUNDING

Thank you to our sponsors for providing funds to enable MHCG to continue the good work we do on the McCrae foreshore:



A DIFFERENT APPROACH TO WEED ERADICATION.

Read in the *Land for Wildlife* 2017 magazine. The article, "A Sweet End to Weeds" was extracted from a paper written by a Margaret Beemster in 2005. The following is a short summary.

Sugar has the potential to control annual weeds, according to research conducted by Charles Sturt University.

The researchers have found that sugar provides a good, short-term non-chemical and ecological friendly method of weed control.

They were primarily interested in using sugar as a tool to help restore the understorey species in grassy box woodlands (near Young NSW).

They spread half a kilogram of refined white sugar to each square metre of soil every three months and found this inhibited weed growth of most annual weeds giving the native plants the opportunity to become well established.

So why does sugar work? Because it is one of the fastest ways of reducing soil nitrate levels. When sugar is spread on the soil, it feeds soil micro-organisms, which then absorb lots of soil nutrients as they grow.

The micro-organisms then hold these nutrients so the weeds can't gobble them up. In effect 'starving' the weed species that require lots of nutrients to grow.

The lack of nutrients stopped the weeds from growing large, allowing the native plants, which can grow well in low nutrient levels, to grow bigger and faster.

Who'd have thought!

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CAN A CITY'S HEALTH AND WEALTH REALLY GROW ON TREES?

Climate News Network 23 January 2018, 11:00am

Planting more urban forests is a simple way not only to improve the health of a city's people, but to make them wealthier too.

LONDON, 22 January 2018

CLIMATE SCIENTISTS who calculated the value of urban forests to the world's great cities have now worked out how town planners can [almost double their money](#). Just plant 20 per cent more trees.

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More than half the world now lives in cities and one person in ten lives in a megacity — one that is home to at least ten million people.

The trees that shade the parks and gardens, and line the urban streets – London planes, limes, magnolias, pines and so on – are known to [add to property values](#) and to make living conditions better for millions who must endure the increasing heat extremes of the urban world.

Last year, researchers put a value on the contributions of the urban forest: [\\$500 million to the average megacity](#), they calculated, in pollution absorbed, temperatures lowered and moisture taken up.

More needed

Now [Theodore Endreny](#), professor of environmental resources engineering at the [State University of New York](#) and colleagues from [Parthenope University in Naples](#) report in the journal [Ecological Modelling](#) that there is more to be done.

“While nature provides a bounty of essential goods and services, such as food, flood protection and many more, it also has rich social, cultural, spiritual and religious significance”

Tree canopies already cover 20 per cent of the area of their ten sample megacities in five continents. They looked at their models of tree cover, human population, air pollution, energy use, climate and spending power and found room for improvement: the same cities could find room for 20 per cent more forest.

Professor Endreny said:

By cultivating the trees within the city, residents and visitors get direct benefits. They're getting an immediate cleansing of the air that's around them.

They're getting that direct cooling from the trees, and even food and other products. There's potential to increase the coverage of urban forests in our megacities, and that would make them more sustainable, better places to live.

Cities are [afflicted by the notorious heat island effect](#). and climate scientists have repeatedly

warned that [extremes of heat and humidity could rise to potentially lethal levels](#) in many of the world's great cities.

The latest study is part of a wider shift in approach by urban planners and civic authorities to seek ways to mitigate the climate change driven by ever more profligate consumption of fossil fuels, without actually adding to this consumption by [installing ever more air conditioning plant](#).

And on the same day, a second team of scientists emphasised the same conclusion: [work with nature](#) to confront climate change and improve the lives of people in the developing world put at risk by climate change, driven in part by [the despoliation of the forests and the degradation of the land](#).

They argue in the journal [Science](#) that a better understanding of the way nature – in the form of forests, wetlands, savannahs and all the creatures that depend on the natural world – underwrites human well-being should inform political and economic decisions.

Local knowledge

In many cases, this would involve attending to the wisdom and experience of local communities, and indigenous people who depend more directly on nature's riches.

[Sir Robert Watson](#), chair of the [Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services](#) said:

Nature's contributions to people are of critical importance to rich and poor in developed and developing countries alike. Nature underpins every person's wellbeing and ambitions — from health and happiness to prosperity and security.

People need to better understand the full value of nature to ensure its protection and sustainable use.

This new inclusive framework demonstrates that while nature provides a bounty of essential goods and services, such as food, flood protection and many more, it also has rich social, cultural, spiritual and religious significance, which needs to be valued in policymaking as well."

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INTERESTED IN LEARNING MORE ABOUT INDIGENOUS CULTURE?

Lional Lauch of [Living Culture](#), conducts public guided walks across the Mornington Peninsula including: Main Creek, Baldrys Crossing, No. 16 beach Rye, The Briars, Bushrangers Bay, Peninsula Springs, and the McCrae Foreshore.

We are in the process of organising a McCrae Foreshore walk for MHCG members and friends. As soon as we have the details – including the cost, we will contact you.

In the meantime, take the opportunity to look at the [Living Culture](#) website at: www.livingculture.com.au

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SEA SPURGE - PULL IT OUT!!

We ran an item about this last year (2017 AGM Issue – you can access it on the website) and just this week at the working bee we collected a great bag full, so this is a reminder that if you see this scourge on the sand dunes, PULL IT OUT!

But be careful when handling it, protect your hands from the sap and ensure that you remove the entire taproot.



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You may have read about this in the local paper.

BEES

A call from Balnarring Beach resident and bee enthusiast, Alex Lusnata has prompted Red Hill ward Councillor David Gill to visit Moonee Valley City Council (MVCC) along with Cr Antonella Celi and the Manager of the Mornington Peninsula Shire's Natural Systems team, Simon Thorning.

Cr David Gill said, "We spent Friday morning (23rd February) with MVCC Mayor John Sipek and learnt about their inexpensive but valuable bee program."

Moonee Valley has the only Municipal sponsored bee program in Victoria. Their goals are to develop an awareness of the value of bees including native bees, increasing local honey production and crop pollination and protecting bees from diseases that have destroyed large populations in Europe and America.

Moonee Valley Council also offer an alternative to the expensive eradication of the occasional bee swarm with a cheap relocation service.

"On the Peninsula we are lucky to have local bee keepers that already offer this service," added Cr Gill.

"Moonee Valley's education program includes giving away hives built by local men's sheds. A key project is 'bee hotels' small hives that come with several native bees. Hundreds of children now care for these non-aggressive bees in their backyards," said Cr Gill.

"I can see the value to the Mornington Peninsula of having a similar program. We need Italian and other overseas bees for agricultural production to safeguard our local \$1 billion food bowl including market gardens and honey production."

"We are losing our native bee population to development and competition from the introduction of honey bees. There were once many kinds of native bees but there has been a drastic reduction. My local favorite is the beautiful blue banded bee but they are now difficult to find. Native bees pollinate our remnant indigenous vegetation and are part of our eco-system."

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"With community support we could relocate honey bees from the Shire's many bush land reserves to agricultural areas. This would increase our native bees population while encouraging honey bees to do their job," continued Councillor Gill.

The next step is to invite the Moonee Valley City Council Mayor to present this program to Mornington Peninsula Shire Council. John Sipek's parting words were "Love to help, it would be great to have a bee sister city to promote these ideas."

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BAN JET SKIS??

If you would like to support a local campaign to limit Jet skis in some parts of Port Phillip Bay, click here:

<https://www.change.org/p/premier-daniel-andrews-ban-jetskis-from-rye-to-point-nepean-national-park>

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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 – and a light lunch to follow.

MORE INFORMATION

For any information about the Group contact one of the Office Bearers listed below.