

PRESIDENT'S REPORT MCCRAE HOMESTEAD COASTAL GROUP AGM 22nd November 2017

Welcome to the 20th AGM of our Association, which marks the 20th year that this group has been working on the McCrae foreshore rectifying the damage done by decades of camping.

The 1996 Rosebud Foreshore Review, prepared for the then Rosebud Foreshore Committee, recommended the removal of camping from the lighthouse to Anthony's Nose, and declaring the area from opposite Beverley Rd McCrae to Anthony's Nose a Conservation Zone. Such foresight seems rarer these days, and that foresight set the scene for establishing the area we work on.

Shortly after this, our group formed to be the oversee-er of works, weed removal and plantings. Those 20 years of volunteer effort (along with supportive paid contractors) is now on display, providing a welcoming slice of natural coastal scenery and diverse indigenous vegetation. So, well done to all the many past and present volunteers for your efforts.

Last year, I reported that the Coastal Management Act 1995 would soon be replaced by a new Marine and Coastal Act. Last week, we received an update from DELWP reporting on its progress.

The Marine and Coastal Bill is expected to be released in late 2017, and funding was allocated in the 2017-18 Victorian Budget to "*kick start improving Victoria's marine and coastal management*". (DELWP'S media release wording) Funding includes just over \$7 million for various coast related projects and activities around the entire Victorian coast.

OUR LOCAL WORKS:

Last year, weed removal and planting in Coburn Creek was completed. This year, using the \$4,000 MPSC grant, we undertook planting at Anthony's Nose. Woody weeds were removed under the supervision of Danielle Suffern as well as plantings near Eyrie Creek and opposite 573 Pt. Nepean Rd, including the spreading and then removal of mulch, to appease the owners of 573 opposite.

We have applied for 3 grants this year- Melbourne Water, PP&WP CMA and Bendigo Bank. Barry will be reporting on the grant amounts.

MEMBERSHIP:

During the year we have welcomed 7 new members and lost one: Felix Fuller-Jackson, who left to pursue further studies. New members are: Andrew Parkinson, Diane Lever, Anne Tardif, Tony Collins, Geoff Reddall, D. Uren and R. Hobman. We are happy to have them all on board.

WORKING BEES:

This year our efforts have focussed on the Eastern end of the Reserve, except for one day (8th October) when we worked at the Lighthouse end of the reserve as weeds there were becoming so prominent. We have worked 22 Sundays on site for a total of 332 hours, including Helen Ryan's contribution picking up rubbish on the beach and foreshore – a never ending task cleaning up after us humans. *Incidentally, it was annoying to see Woolworths latest catalogue had warning that if the container deposit legislation is successful in Victoria their prices will rise as they have in NSW following the introduction of the legislation there. Outrageous and threatening corporate behaviour!*

The highest working bee attendance was 10 on 4 occasions, and the lowest was 4 on the 3rd September. Our first working day for 2017 was 5th February, which was also my 75th Birthday. Tess Graham, our Naturelinks supervisor that day, made a wonderful gesture by baking a homemade elaborate chocolate cake for this auspicious occasion. So, many thanks again to Tess.

This year, I have also created a new category of work for Dee Robinson. While we have been working on site, Dee has been slaving over a hot stove to provide us all with a wonderful lunch to devour after our foreshore work. I've allocated an additional 40 hours for Dee's contributions, which should clearly be counted as work, as her efforts support our work and the thought of an enjoyable lunch has kept us working hard. So adding Dee's contribution to our onsite works, we have given a total of 372 hours work, exceeding our last year's total of 320 hours.

For 20 of our 22 working days, Barry and Dee have welcomed us into their home to enjoy the lunches Dee has provided. We only missed out on their hospitality for two days when both Barry and Dee were literally quarantined with a serious dose of Influenza Type A. So, for your magnificent efforts - Thank you again Dee and Barry.

OTHER ISSUES:

Our secretary Margaret Wilson has again ably supported the group in managing the website, writing newsletters, preparing grant applications and liaising with Council.

In response to some banksias and She-Oaks in our works area being vandalised by suspected property owners opposite, Margaret wrote to Council asking for signs to be erected warning of the up to \$120,000 fines for these environmental crimes. Council was slow to respond but Margaret persisted in getting a response. Council eventually advised that they don't like installing these types of signs. Thank you Margaret for all your efforts as our Secretary.

In the face of this inaction from our Council, it is galling to see other Councils and foreshore committees being prepared to protect their important coastal vegetation, with some erecting very large signs where tree vandalism has occurred, even to the extent of ensuring the signs block the ill gotten view. Perhaps Council's reluctance to install signs may be linked to their own proposal to remove over 100 mature trees from the Rosebud Foreshore camping area- 42 being mature banksias judged dangerous by Council. Along with a number of other concerned residents and groups we made submissions and met with Council to suggest that in particular the important banksias should be protected, and to express concerns that with their proposed management regime the foreshore will eventually lose its mature indigenous tree cover and species reliant on them, and its amenity, as it converts to sand blown weed infested waste land. We also advocated that camping sites could be reduced from the current 880 sites, and re-arranged to separate campers from important trees. This would provide opportunities to create habitat corridors and vastly improve the visual and physical amenity of the area. However, Council has since issued itself a permit to proceed with the project.

Barry Robinson our Treasurer hopefully enjoys pursuing grant opportunities, for which we are most often successful. So, thank you Barry for all your efforts, and to Dee for her additional secretarial support to Barry, and in distributing newsletters etc.

Naturelinks continues to oversee works on our Reserve. Danielle Suffern and Tess Graham supervise our working bees and are both proactive in planning which areas require our attention throughout the year. Both Danielle and Tess go beyond their prescribed duties in the support they give us. We enjoy their company and support very much.

IN CLOSING: As always I thank all our committee members for your work, and all of the membership for your dedication to our special piece of the coastline. May we keep it up for a long time to come!

Len Warfe
President