

At the start of the meeting:

It's my sad duty to tell you of the death on Monday of our dear friend Matt Stahmer. Matt was the Shire's Natural Systems Volunteers co-ordinator for many years and more recently he was the Natural Systems Operations Co-ordinator. His tragic and untimely death this week, while doing what he loved- surfing at St. Andrews Beach- has been a shock to all who knew him. Matt was a wonderful, friendly, sincere and supportive colleague and friend, and a great environmentalist. He is irreplaceable.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT MCCRAE HOMESTEAD COASTAL GROUP AGM 21st November 2018

Welcome to the 21st AGM of our Association, marking 21 years that we have been working to restore the McCrae foreshore from damage done over many years of camping in what is now, thanks to Parks Victoria, a Conservation Zone.

Since our last AGM, the new Marine and Coastal Act has been enacted, but as far as I can tell we are yet to see any changes to how government manages our coastal assets. In fact PPCC invited Environment Minister Lily D'Ambrosio to its recent AGM to explain the Act's benefits for our marine and coastal environments, however the invitation was not even acknowledged, let alone an apology provided.

While we have been working for 21 years to repair the damage of the past in the reserve, the 8 unsightly timber groynes built across the beach into the Bay were slowly rotting away. The groynes had been installed between 1988-1991 in a failed attempt to save a Lifesaving Clubhouse which had been built in the 1960s between the bay trail and the sand line. By the late 1980s the LSC was under wave attack (**pic 1**), and eventually collapsed into the sea despite the groynes and massive rock boulders dumped on the shoreline to "save" the building and car park.

The clubhouse remains were eventually removed in 1995 but the useless groynes remain across the McCrae beach as a hazard and eyesore to this day. In the early 2000s, I was advised by the then Rosebud Foreshore Committee and its successor Parks Victoria, that as the groynes were a failed experiment, they would not be maintained and would eventually be removed. PV by then was the manager of the entire Rosebud Foreshore Reserve.

As the groynes have decayed, the beach has naturally repaired itself – (**pic 2. 2005**), and has remained largely in dynamic equilibrium throughout the seasons and there is now a 27 metre wide stable beach at McCrae. **Pic 3**

In August this year PPCC wrote to DELWP, pointing out the decaying and useless state of the groynes (**pic 4**) and suggesting it was time to finally remove them.

A consultants report obtained from DELWP confirms the groynes are not contributing to the wide and stable condition of the beach, however inexplicably the report attempts to justify spending \$200,000+ to make the beach 3 metres wider. So, we wrote to DELWP again October and November.

So it was a shock on the weekend to see DELWP signs erected at Anthony's Nose and in the McCrae beach car park announcing a program to replace 6 groynes (**pic 5**), with works starting almost

immediately for 2 months to replace the old groynes with ones that extend further into the sea, as per those now at Rosebud pier. Part of the foreshore reserve will also be closed to the public – presumably as a temporary works depot. Meanwhile the public will be inconvenienced and significant taxpayer funds will be spent to possibly widen the beach by another 3 metres. Surely there are numerous other locations around the Bay that DO need immediate attention where the money could be better spent – such as Pt. Nepean National Park, Safety Beach, Mt. Martha - rather than squandering it at McCrae with its stable beach and no immediate problems.

Perhaps this is a pre election stunt by the Andrews government to look generous in an otherwise safe Liberal seat? So I'm hoping DELWP has been receiving lots of complaints since their signs went up, and will think again. If this project ever does start, we will need to keep a close eye on our environmental assets to ensure the reserve is not damaged by this industrial activity.

Working bees and other activities:

During 2018, works have been funded by a number of grants mostly applied for last year or early this year. Successful grant include: Bendigo Bank Sponsorship; Melbourne Water; Coast Care Grant and a small PPWCMA Support Grant.

Nature Links contract works and our working bees have focussed on the eastern end of the reserve, except for 10th June working bee where we planted 121 tubes from the rotunda towards the lighthouse, mostly along the path (**pic 7**). This westerly section of the reserve was where we first started our works 21 years ago and it is now largely self managing.

On 3rd June we planted 175 tubes at two sites near Anthony's Nose (**pic 8**) and on 1st July we planted 83 tubes between the rotunda and the beach car park. During those bees, we also spread at least 3 massive piles of mulch (**pic 9**)

Our group now has 26 members, having welcomed 8 new members in 2018 – Rob and Jennie Stent, Vanessa Grayley and Tyler Miller, Tess Graham, Leon Rotstayn, Ed Anderson and Maureen Gleeson.

We have worked 21 days totalling 388 hours worked (compared with 322 last year). Attendance numbers at working bees has increased substantially with the highest being 14 on two days and the lowest 6 on 4 days. There was only one day (3rd December 2017) when it rained heavily and we did not work - some of us attended an anti Adani Coal Mine rally at Rye instead.

Naturelinks continues to oversee our working bees under the meticulous guidance of Danielle Suffern. Danielle is also a wonderful support to us when we prepare our grant applications, preparing plant lists and estimated work hours etc. Tess Graham was our supervisor on alternate working bees, but has now been replaced by Emily Sharp who is also an enthusiastic and great personality to work with. However Tess says she likes our group and the area so much that she has decided to become a member.

In April Jenny Warfe & Margaret Wilson met with Hannah Brown and Clayton Fenech from the Shire to discuss placement of bollards and rocks to deter and minimise car parking damage in inappropriate places along the foreshore. (**pic 10**) Several new and some missing bollards have now been installed

along the path and some large rocks to block access to some of our works areas which were parked on over last summer. We are grateful to the Shire for its attention to this.

Margaret and Jenny also finalised a project that Len Evans had suggested some time ago, installing a QR scanner at the Rotunda to connect people, via their Smartphone, to our website and newsletters (**pic 11**).

In September our club was presented with an award in the regional *Tidy Town* event for 2018. The award is a testament to the work done especially by Helen Ryan and Andrew Parkinson in collecting litter along our patch.

During the year Dee and Barry Robinson have provided post working bee lunch for us on 19 occasions at their home. As per last year's report, I have added 40 hours to our working bee hours for Dee's catering efforts, to make a total of 428 hours- a record.

Also a record in this club is the outstanding efforts of Barry and Dee right across the operations of our group, including maintaining membership records, grant application work, fund raising, attendance at meetings, and as valued committee colleagues – Barry also being our long standing Treasurer. All their contributions to this group have been done with aplomb, and good grace. However they have both decided to cut back on their activities and Barry will not be standing again as Treasurer. So, we have a vacancy to be filled.

So- on behalf of the club, I thank you both for the many years of help and companionship. It has been our pleasure and privilege to have enjoyed your hospitality, friendship and support.

Margaret Wilson as our secretary, with her usual meticulous efficiency, manages our grant applications, newsletter production, letter writing, pamphlets and website and the numerous responsibilities of a secretary. Thank you Margaret.

Margaret and Jenny are currently working on another Melbourne Water grant for further works at Coburn Creek, (which is one of the first sites we worked on 20 years ago, so it is largely a maintenance project) and a new project to restore the banks of Eyrie Creek (**Pic 12**).

These applications are time consuming and not always successful and now require mastering new mapping techniques as well as onsite meetings with the various funding agencies, and many questions to answer. So thank you again to Margaret for managing this process – with some recent help from Jenny.

As always I thank all our committee members for your work and support, and I thank all the membership for your continued dedication to our special piece of the coastline.

Now Margaret and Jenny have prepared a short slideshow of some of our recent works and changes over time.

We'll also run some historic images of McCrae and Rosebud over supper