

MHCG AGM 2021 PRESIDENT'S REPORT 1st December 2021

Welcome to the 24th AGM of our Association. For over 24 years now we have focussed on restoration of the foreshore and dunes between the McCrae lighthouse and Anthonys Nose. As I said at our last AGM, we should be very proud of what we have achieved in those 24 years. Back then it was degraded from years of camping, introduced weeds and sparse native plant cover. It's now a joy to work in and a welcome sight from all who pass by.

Our reporting year is October to October, and this is the second year that our works have been interrupted by CoVid. However we were able to work for 15 days compared with last year's effort of only 9 days.

This year our highest attendance was 10 and lowest was 4. This amounts to 190 hours of work which is an increase on last year's effort of 9 days and 135 hours. Pre CoVid we usually worked on 22 days contributing around 340 hours.

To our great benefit Naturelinks continues in charge of our working bees, under the guidance of Danielle Suffern and Maggie Logan. Many thanks to them both.

We held last year's Xmas party at Barry and Dee's on 13th December, and due to CoVid we have only had a post work catch up at B&D's on 2 occasions. Once again our sincerest thanks to Barry and Dee for their continuing hospitality and support for our Group.

MEMBERSHIP

We currently have 14 financial members and welcomed one new member this year – Elizabeth Marsh.

WORKING BEES

Despite our limited presence on the foreshore this year we actually did quite a lot of planting- A total of approx. 700 various indigenous grasses, trees and shrubs.

As well as our limited days of work, Naturelinks did their usual fantastic job of keeping our section of McCrae in good shape with their ongoing maintenance works, mulching, additional new plantings, and regular reports on which section they worked on and which grant money is being used.

Unfortunately though we lost a couple of mature trees during the recent severe storms. They are a loss to foreshore amenity and for their important contribution to carbon storage and ability to significantly reduce ambient temperatures. WA's Curtin University Research found that a mature tree can transpire up to 150 litres per day. In a hot dry location this produces a cooling effect similar to that of two air conditioners running for 20 hours, and that the transpiration and shading effects can reduce air temperatures by 1 to 5 degrees C. It will take decades of growth to replace these trees and the hundreds lost across the Peninsula.

We were very pleased with Council finally repairing the internal wall damage to the Rotunda and then Gerard Cooke from Council's Natural Systems organising the installation of bollards near the rotunda, closing off another informal parking area wearing its way into the vegetation around the Rotunda.

Our favourite Banksia, this magnificent tree has become the focus of our advocacy to Council that ad hoc car parking is becoming a growing threat to the integrity of the foreshore and should be significantly reduced.

Gerard Cooke's efforts to help stave off car parking near our favourite Banksia by placing more rocks near it, and the persistent efforts of Naturelinks to re-mulch, re-plant and put up signs every time the area has been vandalised resulted in ONE complaint to Council about car parking being reduced on the foreshore.

The three Seawinds Councillors apparently became involved in “crisis meetings” with the Natural Systems team, and then we received a call from Natural Systems Josh Gunn foreshadowing trouble.

We decided to act swiftly, writing to the three Councillors and the Natural Systems team setting out our position on the need to reduce car parking on the foreshore, especially in this Conservation Zone, and that reducing foreshore parking is in line with countless Foreshore Plans over the last 20+ years. We have requested a written response, yet to be received. Please let us know if you would like to see the letter – which we think is a cracking good read!

GRANTS

This year, Margaret and Jenny successfully applied for grants from Melbourne Water, Coastcare and the Port Phillip Bay Fund, totalling over \$40,000.

MPSC BUDGET FUNDING

We are all very pleased to see the restoration works on Eyrie Creek taking shape. Works are being undertaken by Naturelinks using funds from our successful grant application to last year’s MPSC budget (\$24,500).

Shire’s Natural Systems Team is responsible for managing the grant, paying Naturelinks direct, so unlike other grants we obtain we don’t have the administrative burden! Naturelinks is keeping us well informed of progress. Previously choked with weeds and an eyesore amongst all our other good works, Eyrie Creek is now being transformed into something to be proud of.

One of our midyear working bees focussed on planting dune vegetation where Eyrie creek enters the beach. Unfortunately DELWP’s “beach renourishment” project started around the same time, and although they were asked to stay away from the area some plants may have been smothered by the huge volumes of sand being moved onto the beach.

OTHER ISSUES OF INTEREST

Save Arthurs Seat campaign

Since Save Arthurs Seat campaigners Dr. Mark Fancett and Michelle de la Coeur addressed our 2019 AGM we’ve continued to follow their achievements in trying to stop the massive expansion of quarrying on Arthurs Seat escarpment. They are having a significant impact and attracting media attention, with emerging evidence of health impacts on nearby residents and schools, lots of support from medical professionals and visual evidence of the massive environmental damage the expansion would cause. And, having initially being reluctant to back the Save Arthurs Seat campaign, we hear local MP Chris Brayne has now decided to show support.

Cliff and foreshore at Anthony’s Nose:

At our last AGM I spoke about Jenny and I, along with our friend and Civil Engineer John Weir, writing to Council’s Coastal Planner Zach Grimes, and meeting with newly elected Seawinds Councillors Kerri McCafferty to lobby for the windswept wasteland between the sea wall and Anthony’s Nose cliff to be rehabilitated, and for the unsightly weed infestation on the face of Anthony’s Nose to be weeded and revegetated.

Cr. McCafferty later informed us she took the issue to Council, but they did not support revegetation of Anthony’s Nose, as it is designated as a VicRoads Road Reserve. Other than that any progress on works to rehabilitate the ugly space between Pt. Nepean Rd. and the sea wall has not progressed – possibly due to CoVid delays. Coastal planner Zac Grimes advised that a Master plan may be undertaken in future, and that we would be invited to contribute. A proposed meeting with Zac Grimes was cancelled a couple of months ago, and we are yet to hear more.

Of course any improvement to this barren, rubbish strewn area would enhance the work we have put in on restoring McCrae foreshore, so we hope something will happen soon. We'll keep you informed.

FINALLY

As always, my deep thanks and congratulations to you all for your dedication to keep on working to protect our special place on McCrae foreshore. Your support and companionship is enjoyed and greatly appreciated.

We are particularly grateful to Danielle and her team at Naturelinks for keeping our part of paradise in such good shape during our CoVid absence, for her particular commitment to McCrae foreshore, and for her regular encouraging reports.

To the committee- Once again many thanks to you all, in particular our secretary Margaret Wilson and Treasurer Jenny Warfe. All the committee members' efforts, as usual, have been much appreciated.

At the end of the meeting Jenny will show some before and after images of our works over the last few years.

Len Warfe,
President MHCG,
1st December 2021