

## **McCrae Homestead Coastal Group Inc.**

### **AGM 2022 PRESIDENT'S REPORT 30<sup>th</sup> November 2022**

Welcome to the 25<sup>th</sup> AGM of our Association. For over 25 years now we have focussed on restoring the foreshore and dunes between the McCrae lighthouse and Anthony's Nose, and as I have said at several AGMs now we should be very proud of what we have achieved in those 25 years. When we started working the foreshore was degraded from years of camping, with introduced weeds and sparse native plant cover and habitats for other creatures. From the lighthouse through the camping area towards Rosebud is what our area looked like 25 years ago, but now, thanks to the early vision of then land managers Parks Victoria to create a Conservation Zone and remove camping, and now with our various grants and Naturelinks supervision, McCrae foreshore is a joy to work in and the many compliments we receive are very rewarding and motivating.

Our reporting year is October to October, and unlike the last 2 years, we were able to work for the normal 22 days without CoVid restrictions. Pre CoVid we usually worked on 22 days usually contributing around 300+ volunteer hours.

This year our highest attendance was 10 on two occasions and the lowest was 2 on the 3<sup>rd</sup> July. This amounted to 289 volunteer hours of work compared with 190 last year.

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

I'd like to mention our longstanding members Barry and Dee who we haven't seen much this year. We are always thankful for their continued support; including Dee's sweeping of the rotunda before working bees. So, we were especially pleased to see them both at the 9<sup>th</sup> October working bee with Barry getting stuck right into some mulching and planting. Thank you Barry and Dee for your support over so many years.

#### **MEMBERSHIP:**

We currently have 16 financial members, up from 14 last year, so we welcome our two new members John Weir and Neil Wilson.

#### **GRANTS**

This year, Margaret and Jenny successfully applied for three grants from the Port Phillip Bay Fund, Coastcare, and MPSC's Place Maker grant, totalling \$20,476.

Danielle and her great Naturelinks team have helped us develop our grant ideas and then spend it on all the works we are so proud of. Thank you Danielle and team.

#### **WORKS:**

In April, we held shared working bees with some members of the McCrae Yacht Club, and removed a huge amount of woody weeds, mostly polygala, to the east of the Yacht Club.

Our member Neil Wilson, a lifelong member of McCrae Yacht club, initiated this event. Then in October a Yacht Club member, Jessica Vize, and friend attended both our working bees. So thank you Neil for your initiative in forging links with the Yacht club - our neighbours.

This slide is a record of attendance and works completed on each working bee. In May we began our annual planting activities starting at Anthony's Nose. We completed plantings in October having mulched and planted several areas from Anthony's Nose/Eyrie Creek to west of the Rotunda, including Spinifex plantings next to the beach at Anthony's Nose, then various other grasses, Banksias, She oaks, and groundcovers throughout our usual works areas.

From around the end of last year we started to see the results of the MPSC grant we won for the restoration of Eyrie Creek – funded by a \$24,000 MPSC budget allocation we first applied for in 2019 for the 2020-2021 Budget year. Works were delayed by CoVid, but that money has now all been expended, and although we've made inroads it's clear more needs to be done for Eyrie Creek.

At present, the creek is overgrown with a variety of Dock, although it is at least slowing down what is at present a massive flow of polluted storm water to the Bay. In March this year we applied for another MPSC

budget allocation for 22-23 FY to build on the Eyrie Creek restoration works by funding regular maintenance and plantings on the creek bed and banks. We made the point that Eyrie Creek is a major source of storm water and pollutants to the Bay, and is a prominent part of McCrae Foreshore – seen by all from the beach, and passersby on the Bay Trail and Pt. Nepean Rd. It really needs some more attention, and that means more money! Unfortunately we were not successful.

Despite the ongoing efforts of Naturelinks to re-mulch, re-plant and put up signs to protect our special old Banksia, the area was vandalised.

However around October 2021, after repeated requests, works were eventually OK'd by Council to protect our favourite Banksia from persistent car parking and bike riders using its roots as jumps. Naturelinks and Council officer Gerard Cooke's team placed several boulders around it, and the area was re-mulched and replanted.

Sadly soon after those works, following the big storms at the end of 2021, the Banksia finally succumbed. For the last 12 months it has laid where it fell, and we hoped it would stay that way to help reduce car access to the foreshore.

Unfortunately a couple of weeks ago, it was sawn into logs – thankfully some have been left there, as have the boulders. But, no doubt car parking demands will re-emerge but let's hope Council will not succumb to the noisy demands of a handful of people. You might remember we wrote to Council just before our last AGM after a tip off that after ONE complaint to Council about not having enough foreshore parking, Council appeared to be moving to please the noisy few who want to park wherever they like.

So far, since our letter to Council we haven't been aware of issues about foreshore car parking – although no doubt the demands will return and we hope Council will hold firm against the noisy minority. Although letting sleeping dogs lie is a reasonable tactic for the time being, we need to remain vigilant.

#### **TREE POISONING:**

In late February we noticed significant tree die-off and damage along the Bay Trail and in the beachside part of the foreshore opposite the 3 storey property being built just west of Anthony's Nose. Young banksias planted a few years ago had branches broken off them and larger trees had been drilled and poisoned. I had meetings on site with Council's Enforcement Officer who then sent letters to properties along that stretch of Pt. Nepean Rd, seeking information but received no responses. He then interviewed the suspected property owner - who denied any knowledge of it.

We requested a large sign, ideally blocking the view from the suspect property, be installed near the damaged trees advising the sign will stay until replacement trees have regrown.

There has been no progress on having council erect signs, so with Danielle's assistance earlier this year we erected a temporary sign opposite the suspect property.

To our disgust we have recently discovered at least three more mature trees have been drilled and poisoned, once again all opposite the suspect property.

I have made contact with Council's Enforcement Officer again but am yet to receive a reply. Another disappointing and persistent issue we need to remain vigilant about.

#### **FUTURE WORKS IN PLANNING**

##### **Coastcare Grant - Discovery Days**

##### **Received: \$9955**

This grant will support the establishment of a series of on-ground Discovery Days for families to raise awareness about environmental rehabilitation and protection of the McCrae foreshore.

Two days are planned- Beginning with a Foreshore Walk with a local indigenous person (Lionel Lauch from Living Culture.) in February 2023 and a Bush Art Day in March.

With teachers Liz Marsh and Anne Tardif at the helm, activities will include learning about the history of the McCrae area, how indigenous people cared for country, bush foods, how plants were used for making implements, the importance of re-establishing coastal vegetation indigenous to McCrae, and Bush Art weaving.

The grant will also support continued stewardship of an area revegetated under a previous Coastcare grant.

**Port Phillip Bay Fund - Discovery Days**

**Received: \$9245**

Discovery Day with the Port Phillip Bay Keeper. Participants will enjoy a shoreline shell survey, learn how to identify seaweed species and other marine plants and animals and take part in a micro plastics audit – a “Captain Trash” citizen science activity.

Come’n’Try Day. For families interested in learning about the step-by-step foreshore revegetation planting process. They will also learn about the care and restoration of the fragile McCrae foreshore and how to identify indigenous plants.

The project will support continued stewardship of the McCrae foreshore through woody weed and invasive scrambler treatment between Anthony’s Nose and the Lighthouse.

**MPSC Place Maker Grant:**

**Received \$1276**

To replace the indigenous and weed species information panels in the Rotunda. Submitted that panels are an important source of information for the public to refer to. Installed around 20 years ago, these panels have faded over the years, making them difficult to read.

The signs inviting participation in our working bees are also in poor repair, and are in need of replacement.

**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, 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 images of our works over the last few years.

Len Warfe  
President