

coastline

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winter update 2008

State Coordinator's Message

Matthew Fox, Statewide Program Coordinator

Winter presents us with a good opportunity to do some forward thinking and planning. I recently attended the State Landcare Forum in Creswick, and was impressed by the strong statewide partnership approach that occurs in Landcare.

The value of such partnerships cannot be understated. Experienced people and volunteers need the chance to work with newcomers so that valuable lessons are shared, and new ideas exchanged freely.

The Coast Action/Coastcare program hopes to continue to strengthen its partnership approach over the coming year. We are also looking at new ways of assisting groups to develop and broaden their capacities further. The accumulation of new skills and expertise continues over a lifetime and so we must provide every opportunity for this to occur. I encourage groups to come forward and discuss their needs with the facilitator team.

Lastly, I encourage all readers to familiarise themselves with the new Caring for our Country Community Coastcare Grants process. This new federal initiative represents a significant opportunity for all of us to deliver some lasting gains on our coast. Be sure to connect with your local facilitator to find out more.

Caring for our Country Community Coastcare

On 19 May, the Australian Government launched the new Community Coastcare initiative, under the 'Caring For Our Country' program. \$100 million has been committed nationwide over the next five years to assist coastal communities protect and restore coastal and marine environments. Grants will be available at two levels; smaller community grants and larger, regional 'targeted' grants.

Grants up to \$50,000 are available to assist community groups to deliver projects. Community capacity building will be a key objective of these projects, along with demonstrable environmental improvements. Local government, individuals, private sector and unincorporated bodies sponsored by a legal entity are also eligible for these smaller grants, which will allow projects to be completed over an 18-month period.

Larger, regional 'targeted' grants of up to \$250,000 are available to all coastal stakeholders, including state government agencies. Such projects may be up to two years, and will be expected to deliver significant environmental outcomes which address matters of national environmental significance. RAMSAR sites, protection of threatened species and communities, and those which address listed 'threatening processes' will all be considered. Projects

demonstrating significant in-kind and cash contributions, and those forging new partnerships will be viewed favourably. Likewise, those projects demonstrating clear environmental outcomes around key coastal environmental 'assets' will be well received.

Coast Action/Coastcare has been conducting regional information sessions to assist community groups and coastal stakeholders to develop project proposals prior to the July 25 closing date. Information on these sessions is available through your local facilitator. Those currently considering developing applications should contact their local Coast Action/Coastcare facilitator to discuss their ideas prior to developing proposals.

It is hoped that Victorians from a range of backgrounds can develop successful projects that will not only deliver significant environmental outcomes for the coast, but also develop and strengthen partnerships and capacity for the management of our coastal and marine environments.

Further information is available at <http://www.nrm.gov.au/funding/coastcare.html>

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Victorian Coastal Awards for Excellence 2008

Recognising a conservation volunteer

Surf Coast community volunteer and environment leader, Margaret MacDonald, was presented with a Lifetime Achievement Award at the Victorian Coastal Awards for Excellence.

Margaret provides some insights into how she came to be a volunteer, her past and present achievements, and what volunteering means to her.

My initial interest in the Moggs Creek area began in the 1960s through involvement with the Girl Guide Association, and leading camps at "Tallawalla" in Moggs Creek. My real involvement began in 1989 when my sister Kathie, brother-in-law Peter and I took up residence at Moggs.

*My sister and I were heavily committed to exploring the Anglesea, Aireys Inlet, Moggs Creek area, and were particularly interested in finding and photographing terrestrial orchids. We also enjoyed observing sugar gliders and yellow-bellied gliders which we tracked down in the forest at Moggs Creek and working closely with Mary White of ANGAIR and local rangers. Our most exciting achievement was the re-discovery of the Merrans Sun Orchid (*Thelymitra merraniae*) in 1992 – an orchid which was first discovered in the Moggs Creek area in 1929, but had not been recorded for a very long time.*

In 1993 I retired from teaching and was thrown headfirst into conservation when Mary White asked me to take on the three-year term of ANGAIR presidency in 1994. I was reluctant, but Kathie persuaded me to take on the position.

Sadly Kathie was very ill at the time, and passed away in January 1994. By 1998, Margaret had taken on the position of Secretary of the Friends of Angahook-National Park – now the Friends of Eastern Otways (Great Otway National Park) Inc. – a position she still holds today. Margaret says she has enjoyed her involvement with both groups, and is proud of her achievements. Highlights include finding a new orchid species, clearing environmental weeds, production of the book, *Orchids of the Anglesea District* (with friend Everett Foster), monitoring threatened species and conducting regular hair-tube surveys to find spot-tail Quoll and other rare species, and being involved with school groups.

Margaret said she enjoys the experiences and challenges of working with the various agencies, including Parks Victoria, DSE, Alcoa, CVA, the SurfCoast Shire, and VicRoads, and was honoured to be chosen as the community representative on the National Boneseed Committee.

I have enjoyed interacting with people with so much knowledge about biodiversity in general, and boneseed in particular. You don't go into volunteering to get awards, but it is nice to know your efforts are appreciated. Your main reward is to see the preservation of the biodiversity of the beautiful coastal heathland and the coastal environment – it's an area I've loved all my life and that's why I'm keen to work to preserve it so that others will be able to enjoy it in the future.

< Margaret MacDonald receives her award from the Minister for the Environment and Climate Change, Gavin Jennings



Narrawong pride

By Carolyn Silva, Principal, Narrawong District Primary School (winner, Education Category)

Narrawong is a small coastal town around 350 km west of Melbourne and 70 km from the South Australian border. Our small school of 45 students, five staff and network of families and friends, are all passionate about looking after our coasts and rivers.

The Narrawong District Primary School (NDPS) students, staff and community were absolutely thrilled to win the Victorian Coastal Award for Excellence in the Education category. We pride ourselves on the hands-on approach we have to environmental education and find this is the most beneficial and enjoyable way to deliver environmental education.

We try to take a global balanced approach. We have planted more than 1000 trees on two properties (one on the riparian zone of the Surry River and the other on a feeder gully between Mt Clay State forest and the river), planted grasses on the foreshore, learnt about the hooded plover and the effects of over-use of sand dunes, searched for 'spew worms', learnt about the Bonny Up welling, and the interaction between marine creatures and the ocean. We also do regular beach cleaning walks and try to ensure that the environmental global education program for the students at NDPS is adventurous and fun.

In July we will return to the river to plant another 1000 trees and do water salinity tests. The children understand that actions that occur in the hills and at the start of the Surry River ultimately affect the quality of the water at the outlet to the sea. While we are out planting, the students will be on the lookout for the endangered Orange Bellied Parrot which frequents our area at this time of year.



Victorian Coastal Awards for Excellence 2008

Helping species protection through entertainment

By The Connies (winner Species Protection)

Winning the 2008 Coastal Award for Excellence in the Species Protection category has given us, The Connies, a 'spring in the step' to continue producing quality cards on the unique species from our catchments, coastal dunes, estuaries, seagrass beds, kelp forests and intertidal reefs.

The award has helped to energise us in our quest to expand our understanding and love for our catchments and coastline and to make Victorians aware of what causes, for example, pollution and how we can all help.

The recognition also adds a 'spring in the step' to our yarning and storytelling performers who get out and about amongst a diverse array of Victorians – young and old, in schools or at farm field days, agricultural shows and festivals. We received warm congratulations recently when we attended a schools event at the Heart Morass wetlands near Sale in Gippsland. The word had got around and it warmed our spirits to be appreciated for the role we play.

The Coastal Awards for Excellence ceremony brings together many people interested in Victoria's unique coast. It's important for us to gather occasionally to discuss what's going on along the coast, especially for broad-ranging educators like the Connies. Thanks again to the many people who support and appreciate our efforts.

> *The Connies in action – spreading the environmental message*



Corinella plans for success

By Anwyn Martin and Barbara Oates, Corinella Foreshore Reserve Committee of Management

The Corinella Foreshore Reserve Committee of Management won the award for Coastal Conservation and Management by an Appointed Manager. Denis Cox, Port Phillip East Coast Action/Coastcare Facilitator asked Anwyn and Barbara the secrets of the Committee's success.

Eight years ago the Foreshore Reserve was a mess with weeds, untended tracks, dilapidated facilities and general community dissatisfaction with its condition. So through public workshops, surveys and discussions we asked the community what they wanted. Responses were unanimous. They wanted the Foreshore Reserve returned to "its natural condition", with improved amenities and safety issues addressed.

The community wanted a place to walk the dog, enjoy the bush and birds, picnic with family and friends, enjoy concerts or just sit and look at the beautiful Western Port views. People wanted boating facilities, toilet block and the caravan park upgraded.

So we prepared plans for the next three years then began applying for grants. Because our plans were manageable and clearly had community support, our applications were successful.

As soon as we had the money we started projects using a combination of contractors and many community working bees. Working bees were followed by sausage sizzles to thank the workers and discuss the next stage with them. We made sure the work was completed on time and we reported properly on how the money was spent, with plenty of good photos. By demonstrating that we could complete projects in a timely fashion, funding bodies provide grants for the next stages of the project. We kept the community informed of progress and conducted sessions where people could learn about the Foreshore Reserve and its many natural values.

Partnerships have been the essence of our success, particularly with DSE and Coast Action/Coastcare, the community, and often with the generous assistance from others conducting works in the area.

We are not finished yet. Every year we review priorities and plan further projects to add to the value of the Foreshore Reserve as a conservation and a recreational asset for our community. Committee members were thrilled to receive the award and the community is just bursting with pride!



Local and International Student Volunteers help plant out the healthland.

Future Coasts – preparing Victoria's coast for climate change

By Cathy Ronalds, DSE Climate Change Adaption Branch

The Future Coasts project, which is examining the vulnerability of Victoria's coast to climate change and developing strategies to help communities and industry respond and adapt, is progressing and has so far undertaken a lot of research.

The project involves a great deal of data collection and scientific modelling. Complementing this is a process to determine appropriate planning responses and adaptation strategies to support decision makers.

Digital elevation modelling (DEM)

Initially, this involves acquiring high resolution terrain mapping of the land (topographic) and seabed (bathymetric) along the coastline. This is called digital elevation modelling (DEM) and is acquired using an airborne laser system – the technology used is LiDAR over land and LADS for the seafloor.

To date, most of the topographic mapping has been completed, with the final land data to be acquired during early spring 2008 when the weather next allows. A large amount of land DEM data is currently available and some of our purchasing partners now have this. The bathymetry DEM mapping is scheduled to be run over the summer 08/09 period – a major undertaking requiring up to 14 weeks to complete the whole coast.

Modelling and research

In order to produce vulnerability maps, a range of modelling and research needs to be undertaken to understand how a changing climate could influence storms, waves and coastal processes. This modelling is combined with an assessment of the geology and geomorphology of the coast (ie. sandy

beaches, cliffs, etc) to determine the erodability of the coast.

This will all come together to provide vulnerability maps of the whole coastline which will show where erosion and inundation are likely to occur.

The high resolution DEM will enable much more accurate modelling to occur. For example, we can determine the height of waves as they form across the seabed much more accurately under different climate scenarios.

An expert workshop was held recently to assist the team in planning for the remaining biophysical modelling work. Experts represented disciplines in coastal geomorphology, oceanography, atmospheric science and GIS, and visualisation. Another interesting aspect of this project is that it requires input from a whole range of disciplines.

Planning responses and adaptation strategies

The second phase of the project will deliver products to inform climate change adaptation. It will provide tools to assist land managers and local government implement the results of the vulnerability assessments. Phase 2 will commence soon.

Budget announcement!

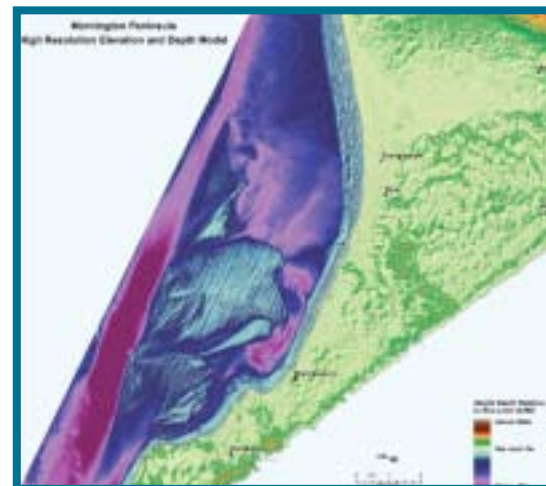
The Future Coasts project received \$8 million in the 2008-09 State Budget. This will be used largely to acquire bathymetric DEM data for the whole coastline.

A further \$1.8 million was allocated for coastal asset management. This work includes the development of an inventory and GIS database of vulnerable public coastal assets using the Future Coasts material.

Completion of Future Coasts

The vulnerability assessments will be delivered at the end of 2009. It is likely that the assessments will be made available in both web and GIS format.

For further information contact Cathy Ronalds in DSE's Climate Change Adaptation branch: email cathy.ronalds@dse.vic.gov.au



The LiDAR data produces very high resolution sea floor and topographic maps which enables modelling of impacts of erosion and inundation to a higher accuracy. The 3D snapshot is looking north east towards Arthurs Seat. This data was captured in 2007.



"Truly Inspirational"

By Jeremy Neilson and Tonia Stokes

Environment care group volunteers seeing first hand the effects of drought, fire and flood at Waterholes

PHOTO CREDIT: NATALIE JENKINS

Each year the dedicated environment volunteers of East Gippsland are treated to a day just for them – the *Bringing the Care Groups Together* forum.

Initiated by Fishcare and Coastcare in 2003, *Bringing the Care Groups Together* has become an annual event attracting more than 60 volunteers, representing some 18 different environment care organisations.

This forum provides environment volunteers the opportunity to take time out to learn – rather than to just give of themselves to others and to their projects – and to meet like-minded,

hard-working, caring volunteers from other groups.

The June 2008 event, titled "Truly Inspirational", was organised by the facilitators of Fishcare, Coast Action/Coastcare, Landcare, Waterwatch and Land for Wildlife, with funding from East Gippsland Catchment Management Authority, Fishcare and Coastcare.

Sally Higgins, life and business strategist from *Accelerate Now*, was present to inspire and motivate.

Care group volunteers presented case studies that highlighted project successes

and challenges – all inspired and extended volunteers' horizons.

The day concluded with a skills workshop that aimed to equip volunteers to institute positive change in their own lives, within their organisations and for the communities and environments they serve.

"Forums such as *Bringing the Care Groups Together* are an integral way to appreciate and invest in volunteers" says Fishcare Facilitator, Tonia Stokes.

For more information, log on to www.fishcare.org.au.

Reporting marine finds

By Bruce Atkin, West Gippsland Coast Action/Coastcare Facilitator

The discovery last month of a dead Pygmy Sperm Whale on the ocean beach of a South Gippsland island highlights the fact that sometimes it is only by mere chance that we learn what is out there in the marine environment.

Retired teachers, Geoff and Joan McDonald spend part of their leisure time volunteering with the Victoria Wader Study Group and with the Port Albert Maritime Museum.

One of their very favourite pursuits, when the weather is suitable, is to take their double canoe out into the waters of Nooramunga Marine and Coastal Park.

Geoff says, "As retirees we are able to choose the best days, unlike others who can only go on weekends or in the holidays. In fact winter, despite the colder water, can be the best time for canoeing as we frequently get calm sunny days when the water is like glass and visibility excellent."

Their preferred option is to paddle a few kilometres to the inlet side of one of the sandy barrier islands that separate Nooramunga from the sea. They regularly see seals, dolphins and hooded

Joan McDonald and her sad find – a dead Pygmy Sperm Whale.

plovers, and in the islands' dunes, lots of mysterious tracks of small mammals and lizards.

In May, Geoff and Joan came to see me at the DSE office at Yarram. They wanted to show me photos of a small dead whale they had seen on one of the islands, and they weren't sure what species it was (and nor was I). They had attempted to report it on-line on an Australian Government website, but weren't sure their message was noted so they decided to speak to a local!

A quick check of various references confirmed it was a Pygmy Sperm. For logistical reasons, relevant agencies were unable to visit the site, although staff from the Dolphin Research Institute (DRI) requested that skin and blubber samples and measurements be taken if possible. The DRI's Ben Camm says, "Sightings like this are really important, and we really want people to continue to report



anything unusual – it may be something new to the area or that has never been recorded before. Even if it turns out to be relatively common, it helps illustrate the point that these things are just out there in the marine environment but few people get to see them."

Update: Subsequent to the discovery of the dead Pygmy Sperm, a week or so later a juvenile about 1 metre in length was found stranded on nearby Snake Island. It died within a short time of discovery. It seems possible that it may have been the offspring of the dead adult.

CAPEL SOUND

Capel Sound Cleans Up at Keep Australia Beautiful Awards



By Rohan Sharp, Manager, Capel Sound Foreshores

Capel Sound Foreshore Committee entered all eight categories of the 2008 Clean Beach Challenge and Sustainable Cities Awards and at the presentation night in May, came away as a finalist in the six categories that were awarded. The Committee is very proud to be the winners in two categories – Community Action and Young Leaders. Not only that, the Committee was the overall winner of 2008 Clean Beach Challenge for Victoria and is now a national finalist for 2009!

Yes I'm boasting but why not – it's a great achievement for our six committee

members and four staff: Ron Fiske, Neville Fuller, Cheryl Witham, Norm McKinlay, Adrian Atkins, Gary Snooks, Rohan Sharp (Manager), Paul Le Page (Ranger – now managing Balnarring Foreshore), Andrew Rogers (Casual Ranger), Joy Bell (Casual Office Administrator). Another Mornington Peninsula volunteer committee, the Crib Point Stony Point Foreshore Committee of Management, won the Protection of the Environment Award for its work at Woolleys Beach Reserve.

Proud winners of the Capel Sound Foreshore Committee: Joy Bell (Office Administrator), Andrew Rogers (Casual Ranger), Rohan Sharp (Manager), Ken Serrvriar (Volunteer) and Mick Tonkin (Ranger).

Congratulation to all involved and especially to Norm McKinlay who put so much effort into preparing the Capel Sound application and achieving so much admirable work on the foreshore.

June Revegetation

By Travis Lee and Dianne Moore

During the month of June more than 1200 students took to the sand dunes from Queenscliff to Apollo Bay as part of the 2008 Sand Dune Edu-Action program – a month-long program aimed at stabilising and revegetating sand dunes across the Surf Coast and Bellarine Peninsulas.

The project sees school groups working closely with local land managers to rehabilitate degraded areas of dune by laying brush matting and planting indigenous plants. Coordinated by the Marine Discovery Centre since 1986, the project is made possible through funding from the Natural Heritage Trust, the assistance of Coast Action/Coastcare and the support of the Western Coastal Board.

"Not only is it a fun day out of the classroom for the students, it's a great opportunity for the

students to learn about a special and unique environment, as well as taking positive steps toward protecting that habitat," said program coordinator and Marine Discovery Centre Educator, Travis Lee.

"It is a great program", said Coast Action/Coastcare Facilitator Dianne Moore. "Sand dunes are one of the most sensitive habitats that we have along the coast. Increased people pressure and inappropriate access across the dunes results in significant degradation."

"We encourage the community to do their bit in supporting the hard work of the students, volunteer groups and land managers who undertake this challenging task, by keeping to the walking tracks and access paths" said Dianne.

Coast Action/Coastcare would like to acknowledge the contribution from our partners (land managers), including Borough of Queenscliff, Barwon Coast Committee of Management, Great Ocean Road Coast Committee, City of Greater Geelong and Apollo Bay Foreshore Committee.

Torquay Primary School undertaking brushmatting at Whites Beach.



Reconciliate 08 – dreaming together

By Phillip Wierzbowski Port Phillip East Coast Action/Coastcare Facilitator

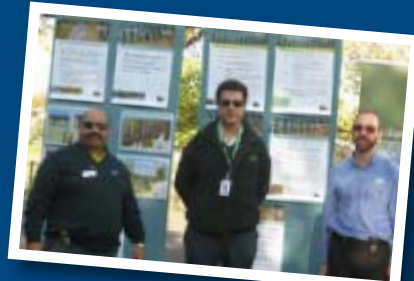
National Reconciliation Week is a great opportunity to celebrate with Australia's Indigenous people. The City of Melbourne, in partnership with Reconciliation Victoria, hosted activities showcasing Victoria's Indigenous talent through cultural activities and dance workshops at Federation Square and along the Yarra River.

The Department of Sustainability and Environment's Indigenous firefighters, cultural heritage protection team and Port Phillip Indigenous engagement staff put together a great display – "Dreaming Together".

"The success of this event was the feeling of respect and harmony amongst Indigenous and non-Indigenous people on the day and the discussions around coming together like this to communicate and learn to appreciate each others' cultures and heritage," said Phillip Wierzbowski, Port Phillip East Coast Action Coastcare Facilitator. "The stronger our relationships become, the greater benefit for the people and environment we interact with."

For further information, refer to DSE's Indigenous Partnership Framework, see www.dse.vic.gov.au and follow the links to Land Management > Land > Indigenous.

(L-R) Stephen Walsh (DSE), Shane Reger (Parks Victoria) and Phillip Wierzbowski (DSE)



Boatie Update

Grants available for boaties

State Government grants are now available to assist with upgrading of boating facilities and community harbours.

Application forms for the 2008/09 Boating Safety and Facilities Program (Grants) can be downloaded from the Boating Industry Association of Victoria (BIA) website at www.biavic.com.au.

BIA is keen to support applications. Contact Christopher Keegan on phone (03) 8696 5600 or email ck@biavic.com.au.

Closing date for applications is **Tuesday, 15 July 2008**.

Watch out pests

Climate change and pollution are not the only serious threats to Victoria's marine environments.

Marine pests are invading and damaging our unique marine ecosystems. Pests such as the northern Pacific Seastar from Japan and the Sabella worm from Europe are competing for food and resources with our native plants and animals, and having a severe impact on some species.

The Boating Industry Association of Victoria (BIAV) has information on pests and how you can help, visit www.biavic.com.au.

Coming Events

7–10 July	Australian Marine Science Association and New Zealand Marine Science Society Christchurch NZ
25 July	Closing Date for Caring for Our Country Community Coastcare Grant Applications
18–22 August	Coast 2 Coast 2008 (Darwin, NT) The Coast to Coast 2008 Conference will be held at the new Darwin Convention Centre, in the NT. The theme of this year's conference is 'Coast to Coast Collaboration: Crossing Boundaries'.
7 September	National Threatened Species Day (Australia) National Threatened Species Day is held each year to encourage the community to help conserve Australia's unique native fauna and flora.
19–22 October	International Youth Coastal Conference (Townsville, QLD) The conference seeks to raise awareness about the importance of protecting and enhancing our coastal environments, communities and industries through education and involvement of the next generation of leaders.

Coast Action/ Coastcare Contacts

Coast Action/Coastcare Facilitators

Gippsland Region

Bairnsdale

Jeremy Neilson
Tel: 03 5152 0431
Mob: 0408 357 343
Email: jeremy.neilson@dse.vic.gov.au

Yarram

Bruce Atkin
Tel: 03 5183 9116
Mob: 0429 842 142
Email: bruce.atkin@dse.vic.gov.au

Port Phillip Region

Box Hill

Denis Cox
Tel: 03 9296 4532
Mob: 0409 958 050
Email: denis.cox@dse.vic.gov.au

Phillip Wierzbowski

Tel: 03 9296 4525
Mob: 0411 409 815
Email: phillip.wierzbowski@dse.vic.gov.au

Western Region

Anglesea

Tracey Pennington (*Mon–Tues*)
Tel: 03 5220 2008
Mob: 0409 332 197
Email: tracey.pennington@dse.vic.gov.au

Frances Northeast (*Wed–Fri*)

Tel: 03 5220 2008
Mob: 0400 906 653
Email: frances.northeast@dse.vic.gov.au

Warrnambool

John Amor
Tel: 03 5561 9955
Mob: 0429 976 189
Email: john.amor@dse.vic.gov.au

Geelong

Dianne Moore
Tel: 03 5226 4669
Mob: 0411 262 868
Email: dianne.moore@dse.vic.gov.au

Statewide Coordinator

Melbourne

Matthew Fox
Tel: 03 9637 9742
Mob: 0417 399 226
Email: matthew.fox@dse.vic.gov.au

Visit our web site at:

www.dse.vic.gov.au/coasts

Australian Government

NRM Facilitator – Coastcare

Tim Allen
Tel: 03 9637 8493
Mob: 0438 463 884
Email: tim.allen@dse.vic.gov.au

Coastline Editors:

Matthew Fox & Carolyn Munckton

To receive Coastline in the future contact your local Coast Action/Coastcare facilitator or phone (03) 9637 9742.