

Community and Environment Advisory Committee Minutes



Meeting held: 4:00pm, Thursday 30th April 2015 at the Education Pod (Summerlands)

1	Welcome & Apologies		
1.1	<p>The Chair declared the meeting open at 4:09pm, acknowledged the traditional custodians of this land and paid respect to the elders past and present.</p> <p>Attendance / Apologies are listed below:</p> <p>Environment Committee: Andrew Paxton (CHAIR and Board), Tania Maddigan, Gavan O'Connor, Penny Manning, Derek Hibbert.</p> <p>Community Committee: Stephen Davie (Board), Margaret Hancock, Patsy Hunt, Pauline Taylor, Christine Grayden, Michael Whelan, Deborah Holland, Anne Davie, Lois Gaskin.</p> <p>In Attendance: Matthew Jackson (Chief Executive Officer), Damian Prendergast (Major Projects Manager), Jarvis Weston (Ranger in Charge), Hayley Smith (Executive Assistant - Minutes)</p> <p>Apologies: Stella Axarlis (CHAIR and Board), Dr Roz Jessop (Environment Manager), Mike Cleeland, Deirdre Griepsma, Jane Daly, Jan Fleming, Stephen Fullarton, Joel Geoghegan, Bessie Tyers, Tim Ealey, Paul Smith, Cr. Kimberley Brown.</p> <p>The Chair welcomed Derek Hibbert (Environment representative for Bass Coast Shire Council) and Lois Gaskin (new representative for Phillip Island Tourism and Business Association).</p>		
2	Minutes from Previous Meetings	ACTIONS	STATUS
2.1	<p>The minutes of the Community Advisory Committee meeting and Environment Advisory Committee meeting held 26th February 2014 were accepted as a true and correct record.</p> <p>Moved: Pauline Taylor Second: Christine Grayden</p>		
3	Matters Arising from Previous Minutes	ACTIONS	STATUS
3.1	<p><u>Short-tailed Shearwaters</u></p> <p>Comment: Steve Fullarton enquired regarding this year's statistics on short-tailed shearwater numbers.</p> <p>Comment: Christine Grayden enquired regarding the effectiveness of the new artificial shearwater burrows (boxes).</p> <p>Response: (ACTION) The Ranger in Charge to follow up with Research.</p> <p>This season, there were 16 eggs laid and 13 chicks from 30 artificial nest boxes established in 2010 by the Research team at the Penguin Parade. This compares to 16 chicks in 2012, 12 in 2013 and none in 2014. From another 149 nest boxes that were installed just prior to this breeding season, there were 27 eggs laid yielding 14 chicks. This is encouraging as more shearwaters used these new nest boxes for breeding than was expected based on uptake rates in other studies, and bodes well for future monitoring. So, the shearwater breeding season for 2014/2015 has been successful and is similar to years monitored prior to the wreck of 2013/2014.</p>	<p>Ranger in Charge to follow up regarding data available on 2015 shearwater numbers and boxes.</p>	<p>Complete.</p> <p>See left.</p>
3.2	<p><u>Swan Lake Viewing Areas (shutters)</u></p> <p>Comment: Steve Davie suggested instructions for visitors to Swan Lake regarding the shutters in viewing areas (whether they should be left open or closed). Members agreed.</p> <p>Response: (ACTION) The CEO advised that he would follow up (the shutters should remain closed as birds live inside).</p>	<p>CEO to follow up regarding instructions for shutters in viewing areas at Swan Lake.</p>	<p>In progress.</p>
3.3	<p><u>Coastcare Groups</u></p> <p>Comment: Christine Grayden recommended Red Rocks Coastcare and Saltwater Creek Coastcare (new group) volunteer groups and suggested liaison by the Nature Parks.</p> <p>Response: (ACTION) CEO to follow up with Ranger in Charge regarding contact with the above groups (contact may already be established as Nature Parks already liaises and works with many volunteer groups on Phillip Island).</p> <p>UPDATE (30.4.15):</p> <p>The Ranger in Charge advised Red Rocks Coastcare is a Council affiliated group. The Nature Parks is working with both</p>	<p>CEO to follow up regarding contact with Red Rocks Coastcare and Saltwater Creek Coastcare groups.</p>	<p>Complete.</p> <p>See left.</p>

	groups. Gavan O'Connor tabled the agenda for the Phillip Island Coastcare Leadership Program event to be held over the coming weekend (Saturday 2 and Sunday 3 May 2015) at the Koala Conservation Centre (Chisholm Room) and provided a copy for committee members. Registration is still open.		
3.4	<p><u>Vegetation removal (Justice/Ventnor Road)</u></p> <p>There was general discussion about the vegetation removal at the corner of Justice Road and Ventnor Road where road works have been occurring to upgrade the intersection for a housing development. Members felt that there was more vegetation removed than necessary to cater for the new turning lane.</p> <p>Response: Deirdre Griepsma advised that she would check the planning permit.</p>	Deirdre Griepsma to follow up regarding recent vegetation removal at the corner of Justice Road and Ventnor Road.	In progress.
4	Phillip Island Nature Parks Update	ACTIONS	STATUS
4.1	<p><u>General Nature Parks Update - CEO:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visitation is up 51,531 or 7% year to date. Easter was very positive with nice weather and good penguin numbers (over 1500 per night in April). Domestic visitation increased over April. • Congratulations to the Phillip Island National Surfing Reserve Working Group on the success of the second annual surfing teams challenge event held at Cape Woolamai in April. 12 teams were entered in total, with 99 individual surfers • Phillip Island Nature Parks has been awarded the 2015 Australian Coastal Award in the category of 'Planning and Management' for the restoration of the Summerland Peninsula. • After focusing on environment-related awards over the past 5 years with great success, the Nature Parks this year will re-enter into the Victorian Tourism Awards in categories 'Major Attraction' for the Penguin Parade and 'New Product Development' for the Eco-Boat Tour. • Summerland Peninsula is again being reviewed regarding a National Heritage Listing. • The Board has endorsed the new Phillip Island Nature Parks Reconciliation Action Plan 2015-20 which is now with Reconciliation Australia for final approval. • The Research Manager and CEO have continued to work with Google, the Penguin Foundation and Victoria University to finalise timelines and milestones for the Magnetic Particle Technology project. The Penguin Foundation was successful in obtaining a \$250,000 grant from the Australian Google Impact Challenge for development and testing to finalise the project. • The Nature Parks' Board is due for renewal, with the new Board to commence in September 2015. The Nature Parks has no involvement in the selection process, which is conducted by the Minister's office. • The Nature Parks has been involved in consultation for the Draft Cowes Activity Centre Plan which has been released by Council, and will be finalising a formal submission in early May. • The 5th annual Community Open Day was held on Sunday 1st March. A big thank you to Working Group members and staff for their support during planning and on the day. Around 2000 community members attended. <p>Comment: Committee members commented that the koala activity was again very popular this year, as was the fox dogs demonstration and possums.</p> <p>Comment: Patsy Hunt commented that blending of the BirdLife Bass Coast and Friend of the Koalas activities worked well.</p> <p>Comment: Lois Gaskin enquired regarding the Guinness World Record event.</p> <p>Response: The day was a huge success with 891 people dressed as penguins (smashing the record!)</p>		
4.2	<p><u>Environment Update – Ranger in Charge</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rangers have been busy with this year's short-tailed shearwater rescue program. This year's breeding season has been positive and numbers are up again to original levels. 185 birds have been rescued off the roads, and 185 have been found dead so far. The bridge lights are being turned off for 10 days this year. <p>Comment: Michael Whelan enquired if 10 days is long enough, and acknowledged SP Ausnet.</p> <p>Response: Research has advised that the majority of birds are gone however a few still remain. The Ranger in Charge and CEO discussed involvement by VicRoads (including Traffic Management Plan sign-off) and SP Ausnet (who turn the lights off on the bridge), and cost of the program per year (around \$150,000 in staffing and resources).</p> <p>Comment: Michael Whelan enquired regarding placement of non-intrusive lighting on the bridge.</p> <p>Response: Research is undertaking studies on the effects of different lighting on short-tailed shearwaters (3-year project).</p> <p>Comment: Penny Manning advised that there had been a positive response from the Newhaven community regarding this</p>		

	<p>year's program.</p> <p>Comment: Derek Hibbert enquired regarding numbers in relation to previous years.</p> <p>Response: Committee members noted that a debrief will be provided at the next advisory committee meeting (ACTION). The CEO highlighted potential for someone to fund program ongoing.</p> <p>Comment: Gavan O'Connor enquired regarding the rescue process.</p> <p>Response: The Ranger in Charge detailed signage, safety equipment used and process.</p> <p>Comment: Committee members provided feedback that the signs are perceived as road works signage.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recent volunteer groups have included many university groups, National Australia Bank, and Green Army who have now commenced weed projects. Major weed projects are underway at Cape Woolamai. We have had another fox detection dog join the program with 'Lady'. Fox activity has been detected at Princeton Avenue, Cape Woolamai and Ventnor Common. Sam and Jazz (Nature Parks fox detection dogs) recently assisted DELWP (Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning) to locate fox scats close to the Marysville township where baits cannot be used. The dogs found 121 fox scats in less than five full days of searching covering 71 kilometres of firebreaks and bush tracks. The fox scats they found will be sent to a laboratory for analysis. 85 cats have been removed from the Nature Parks so far this financial year. Control measures including compulsory de-sexing and a "cat curfew" are currently in discussion by Council's animal management subcommittee. <p>Comment: Christine Grayden asked if the Nature Parks will make a submission to the Federal Government regarding cats.</p> <p>Comment: Patsy Hunt tabled a recent media release by the Department of Environment advising that the Minister for the Environment has released the draft 'Threat abatement plan for predation by feral cats' for public comment. Comments are invited until 8 July 2015.</p> <p>Response: The Nature Park will be making a formal submission to the Australian Government Environment Department regarding the threat abatement plan for feral cats, in particular being supportive of initiatives such as having a feral cat bait available for use across all conservation areas in Australia and eradicating feral cats from islands.</p> <p>It was flagged that the list of "species under pressure" does not include penguins or short-tailed shearwaters.</p> <p>Comment: Deborah Holland flagged damage caused by possums and asked what residents can do and if it is affecting koala numbers.</p> <p>Response: The Ranger in Charge discussed damage caused by brush-tail possums (including at KCC). A possible research program into possums (including densities) is currently in discussion. Possums are the responsibility of DELWP. There are no direct effects on koala numbers. Committee members discussed possible effects on ringtail possums.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Nature Parks has made comment on the draft Rabbit Strategy developed by Landcare in collaboration with Nature Parks, Council, Parks Victoria and other agencies. 12-13 Hooded Plovers fledged this year, which is the best season on record. Thank you to volunteers who assisted this year. In the year ending 31 March 2015, the koala population at the KCC reduced from 30 to 23. This was due to four deaths, four escapes and one birth. Development of a Koala Management Plan is in progress. Nature Parks Rangers responded to 126 wildlife rescue calls during February and March. It continues to be busy! Rangers conducted a small burn at the Koala Conservation Centre (KCC) as per our Fire Operations Plan (a very small burn of 0.6 Ha for ecological purposes). New trail signage has been installed from Oswin Roberts through to Rhyll. New 'special shorebird' signage has also been installed on beach access tracks to raise awareness of hooded plovers and shearwaters. New interpretational signage is being developed to educate and raise awareness about Rhyll Inlet and surrounds. <p>Comment: Lois Gaskin provided positive feedback regarding the appearance and revegetation work by the Nature Parks at the Rhyll Transfer Station site.</p>	<p>Ranger in Charge to provide a debrief on the 2015 Short-tailed Shearwater Rescue Program at the next advisory committee meeting.</p>	
4.3	<p><u>Signage Strategy for Rhyll and Observation Point</u></p> <p>The Ranger in Charge presented an overview of the proposed signage strategy for Rhyll Inlet and Observation Point which included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New information shelters (at Conservation Hill and McIlwraith Road) Marker buoys (with graphics) along the seaward boundary of the Nature Park (Rhyll Special Management Area). These are not to restrict access; they are just to inform users they are entering a sensitive conservation area and to 		

	<p>travel slowly as to not disturb birds.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interpretational signs strategically placed along walking tracks - Special shorebird signs at entry points to Observation Point. <p>Comment: Christine Grayden asked if specific knowledge around buoys (including colours) is included in the process to obtain a boat licence.</p> <p>Response: Yes, and information/updates are distributed to mariners.</p> <p>Comment: Deborah Holland raised concern that the colour of the buoys for conservation areas (yellow) is the same as buoys which are there for other purposes (visitors may assume they are the same).</p> <p>Response: There are rules and guidelines that must be complied with regarding overall colour schemes for buoys.</p> <p>Comment: Patsy Hunt enquired about communicating information to jet ski users.</p> <p>Response: There will be information/updates distributed to local clubs to get the message out where possible.</p> <p>Committee members suggested further information distribution via:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inclusion in club websites and newsletters/magazines. - Placing flyers at local accommodation houses (including in rooms). - Signage and information at local boat ramps - Distribution via Council media/offices. <p>Comment: Michael Whelan enquired regarding speed limits and if they are shown on the buoys.</p> <p>Response: The Nature Parks must comply with the regulations applicable for the area. (ACTION) Ranger in Charge will further discuss speed limits in the Observation Point / Rhyll Inlet with Parks Victoria. Committee members showed support for the area to have a speed limit of 5 knots.</p> <p>There was positive feedback from committee members regarding signage designs in etched stainless steel on wooden panels, consistent with all new Nature Parks signage. The signage features more graphics and has a life of 10-15 years.</p> <p>Comment: Deborah Holland raised concern regarding vandalism and theft of the signs.</p> <p>Response: The signage is made of and attached with different materials to the NSR signage (noting the National Surfing Reserve NSR plaque which was stolen – later recovered)</p> <p>Comment: Deborah Holland raised that welcome signage at the Penguin Parade is looking run down.</p> <p>Response: The CEO advised that new signage is being rolled out precinct by precinct (Penguin Parade soon).</p> <p>Comment: Gavan O'Connor enquired regarding signage for Scenic Estate</p> <p>Response: The signage will be the same style and Nature Parks is working with Council on this.</p> <p>Comment: Deborah Holland suggested that signage close to the entrance to conservation areas would be most effective.</p> <p>Response: Signage will be included at the new information shelters at the entrances as well as in sensitive areas.</p> <p>Comment: Michael Whelan raised concern regarding community perception toward the buoys and suggested a community meeting/presentation to inform locals.</p> <p>Response: A communication strategy has been developed to consult with stakeholders.</p> <p>Comment: Tania Maddigan asked if the toilet would remain at Conservation Hill.</p> <p>Response: Yes. Master planning for the area will identify the best designs and make recommendations.</p> <p>Comment: Christine Grayden raised that there could be more awareness that people are in Nature Parks-managed areas.</p> <p>Response: The CEO discussed that there are many different land managers in some areas and further master planning (to be undertaken soon) will look at these issues.</p> <p>Comment: Michael Whelan flagged urgency and importance of addressing this issue.</p> <p>The Ranger in Charge thanked committee members for their feedback.</p>	<p>Ranger in Charge will further discuss speed limits in the Observation Point / Rhyll Inlet with Parks Victoria.</p>	
5	Major Projects Update Presentation	ACTIONS	STATUS
5.1	<p>The Major Projects Manager provided an update presentation regarding the Nobbies redevelopment and new Penguins Plus projects.</p> <p><u>Nobbies Redevelopment</u></p> <p>The Nature Parks has partnered with World Wide Fund For Nature to redevelop the basement area of the Nobbies centre (also</p>		

includes some improvements upstairs) for an exciting new attraction “Antarctic Journey Nobbies Ocean Discovery” which will include educational interactive components and a walk-through interpretive experience through the main chamber, all themed around the Southern Ocean including its islands, marine species, and highlighting conservation issues. The top floor remains free entry; the lower level will be a paid exhibition. Demolition within the building has commenced (construction component is currently out to tender).

Comment: Christine Grayden asked if there will be lift installed.

Response: Yes, the attraction will be disability compliant.

Comment: Christine Grayden enquired regarding the construction budget.

Response: \$6m including back-log repairs and maintenance on the Nobbies building. All work is related to fit-out (nothing structural).

Comment: Margaret Hancock enquired about the water in the basement (previously used for old boat ride).

Response: Current water storage will be replaced by a new purpose built tank. The water in the basement is required to be retained as part of the buildings fire regulations.

Comment: Lois Gaskin enquired regarding changes to the café and upstairs function area.

Response: Both the café and function room will remain, with minor changes to the seating area in the café.

Comment: Pauline Taylor raised that the current background music at the Nobbies is intrusive to the experience.

Response: There will be background music in the immersive chamber exhibition which is complimentary to the visual experience.

The committee noted that the Nobbies playground equipment is being relocated (donated) to the Cowes bowling alley.

New Penguins Plus:

This project was highlighted as an opportunity in the Summerlands Master Plan completed in 2011. The project involves a new boardwalk, platform and underground bunker-style viewing experience for Penguins Plus. The new boardwalk will have an altered look, shape and size to promote better penguin viewing for individuals, tour groups. The Nature Parks completed a full feasibility study including technical reports related to environmental sensitivities as well as the necessary cultural and coastal considerations and approvals needed prior to the project going ahead.

Comment: Penny Manning enquired regarding capacity of the new tour area. **Response:** 40.

Comment: Christine Grayden raised concern regarding penguin burrows.

Response: Revegetation will take place around the coffee cart area where old infrastructure will be removed. The penguin burrows in that area are artificial. The new boardwalk is a single post structure which will be less intrusive in the long run.

Comment: Michael Whelan enquired regarding location of the new structure.

Response: The bunker and new platform will replace the existing Penguins Plus structure (minimal additional footprint).

Comment: Michael Whelan enquired regarding ticketing for the bunker.

Response: The bunker will be ticketed separately due to operational issues.

Comment: Patsy Hunt enquired regarding the bunker's capacity. **Response:** 45.

Comment: Deborah Holland flagged concern for visitors that will miss out as the new bunker option will be popular.

Response: There will be a staged process of improvements which will flow on to the rest of the viewing areas.

Comment: Michael Whelan enquired regarding Penguins Plus sales.

Response: Penguins Plus currently is at 105% capacity. The entire Penguin Parade sells out around 14 nights per year.

Comment: Deborah Holland raised concern regarding the new look of Penguins Plus versus the old look of the other areas.

Response: The theme will be carried through during the staged improvements to the other viewing areas and incorporated into designs for future infrastructure.

Comment: Steve Davie highlighted the growing trend for recycled plastic.

Response: The use of recycled plastic is being considered for other areas of the Nature Parks. It was determined unsuitable for this particular project.

Comment: Lois Gaskin enquired regarding the opening date.

Response: The new viewing area will be open for the peak Christmas period.

	<p>Comment: Michael Whelan enquired regarding closure during construction.</p> <p>Response: Penguins Plus will be unavailable during construction. Extras such as meet and greets, extra tours and experiences are being made available for the market, particularly bus groups.</p> <p>There was a positive response from committee members regarding the project.</p> <p>Committee members noted that the draft Churchill Island Conservation Management Plan is currently being reviewed by the Board. It is anticipated that the plan will be finalised by the end of this financial year. There will be special presentations for the Nature Parks advisory committees and also a community session.</p>		
6	Terms of Reference	ACTIONS	STATUS
6.1	<p>Committee members received a hard copy of the revised Terms of Reference (TORs) for the Community Advisory Committee and the Environment Advisory Committee which had been finalised after feedback from committee members and reviewed and approved by the Board. Members noted that the electronic version would be distributed via email (ACTION).</p> <p>The CEO thanked members that had confirmed their intention to continue their membership and representation on the committee for a further term. It was requested that members who had not, please do so with the Executive Assistant, who will follow up with members individually (ACTION).</p> <p>The CEO provided an overview of feedback received from committee members during the review of the TORs. The final documents included the following key changes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistency/continuity between the Community and Environment TORs • Term of appointment is now 3 years and membership is now approved by Board • Meeting frequency is reduced to 4 meetings per year, with extra meetings as required. Both committees remain joined for the entire meeting, except for specific items • Clarification that the committees are advisory committees (not decision making committees) • Requests for membership can be made in writing to the Chair at any time for consideration and during each review of the TORs review, Chair will request recommendations for representation by other groups • Advice regarding attendance by substitutes may be proposed to the Chair with prior notice. • The onus on committee members to disseminate the information they receive at meetings to their organisations and other community members, emphasised. <p>Committee members noted that new meeting dates (now reduced to 4 meetings annually) will be resolved by the Board in May and then forwarded to committee members asap.</p>	<p>Executive Assistant to distribute electronic versions of the final Terms of Reference to committee members (via email).</p> <p>Executive Assistant to follow up directly with individual members who have not yet confirmed their membership for a further term (3 years).</p>	<p>Complete.</p> <p>Complete.</p>
7	Matters Arising and Advice from Committee Members:	ACTIONS	STATUS
7.1	<p><u>2015 Community HART Awards</u></p> <p>Comment: Anne Davie advised that the Shearwater Festival Working Group had recently been announced as finalist for the 2015 Community HART Awards ("Community Organisations" category) for the Shearwater Festival 2014 event (nominated by Bass Coast Shire Council). The awards recognise reconciliation and partnership between community groups and local Government. Winners will be announced on 28th May 2015.</p>		
7.2	<p><u>NSR Surfing Challenge Event</u></p> <p>Comment: Derrek Hibbert advised that this year's event was highly successful, now in its second year. It included an effective format and a variety of teams, age groups, different types of surfing and strong community engagement. Thank you to the Nature Parks for supporting the NSR Working Group and this event.</p>		
7.3	<p><u>Dead Penguin at Flynnns</u></p> <p>Comment: Pauline Taylor raised concern regarding a dead penguin she had seen above the shoreline at Flynnns Beach that morning which appeared to have a puncture mark on its body.</p> <p>Response: Ranger in Charge will investigate. (ACTION)</p>	Ranger in Charge to investigate report of the dead penguin at Flynnns Beach.	
7.4	<p><u>Signage – Land for Sale at Rhyll</u></p> <p>Comment: Patsy Hunt raised concern about two signs regarding land for sale at Rhyll with description wording "nature park' and</p>		

	<p>'free-hold wildlife sanctuary'.</p> <p>Response: The CEO confirmed that there is no trademark held on the words "Nature Park".</p>		
7.5	<p><u>Caravan Park Proposal</u></p> <p>Comment: Margaret Hancock asked if there is any update regarding the caravan park proposal (Forrest Caves).</p> <p>Response: No update available.</p>		
7.6	<p><u>Rabbit Strategy</u></p> <p>Comment: Michael Whelan raised that a holistic approach to the strategy would be most effective.</p> <p>Response: The aim of the strategy is to harness everyone's individual efforts and leverage for funding.</p> <p>Comment: Gavan O'Connor flagged issues in residential areas including use of Pindone.</p> <p>Comment: Penny Manning advised that there are cages being used along Newhaven foreshore featuring a tunnel design (with carrots at the end of the tunnel) to stop bigger animals like wallabies from getting into the cage.</p>		
7.7	<p><u>Gardener Position – Churchill Island</u></p> <p>Comment: Christine Grayden asked when the new gardener for Churchill Island would be appointed.</p> <p>Response: Interviews in progress.</p>		
7.8	<p><u>Garden Beds at Cape Woolamai</u></p> <p>Comment: Gavan O'Connor enquired regarding the garden beds at Cape Woolamai around the surf club.</p> <p>Response: The CEO discussed flooding and erosion issues, and that master planning for the area will commence soon and will examine these issues including land management responsibilities for the longer term.</p>		
8	Other Business		
8.1	Nil.		
9	Next Meeting		
9.1	<p>The Chair and CEO thanked committee members for their contribution.</p> <p>The meeting was closed at 6:12pm.</p> <p>Committee members noted that new meeting dates (now reduced to 4 meetings annually) will be resolved at the May Board meeting and then forwarded to committee members asap.</p>		