

Community Advisory Committee Minutes



Meeting held: 4:00pm, Thursday 26th June 2014 at the Education Pod (Summerlands)

1	Welcome & Apologies			
1.1	<p>The Chair declared the meeting open at 4:06pm, acknowledged the traditional custodians of this land and paid respect to the elders past and present.</p> <p>The CEO welcomed new committee members Deirdre Griepsma (Environment Manager, representing Bass Coast Shire Council) and Gavan O'Connor (representing the Southern Communities Planning Group).</p> <p>Attendance / Apologies are listed below.</p> <p>Environment Committee: Andrew Paxton (CHAIR and Board), Paul Smith, Deirdre Griepsma, Penny Manning, Joel Geoghegan, Gavan O'Connor, Mike Cleeland</p> <p>Community Committee: Stella Axarlis (CHAIR and Board), Stephen Davie (BOARD), Patsy Hunt, Margaret Hancock, Pauline Taylor, Michael Whelan, Anne Davie, Christine Grayden, Deborah Holland, Jane Daly,</p> <p>In Attendance: Matthew Jackson (Chief Executive Officer), Dr Roz Jessop (Environment Manager), Hayley Smith (Executive Assistant - Minutes).</p> <p>Apologies: Tim Ealey, Stephen Fullarton, Jan Fleming, Gill Hardman, Tania Maddigan, Bessie Tyers, Cr. Kimberley Brown, Louise Parsons.</p>			
2	Minutes from Previous Meeting	ACTIONS	STATUS	
2.1	<p>The minutes of the meeting held 30th April 2014 were accepted as a true and correct record.</p> <p>Moved: Margaret Hancock. Seconded: Patsy Hunt.</p>			
3	Matters Arising from Previous Minutes	ACTIONS	STATUS	
3.1	<p><u>South and North Coast Beaches Key Area Plan</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentation by Inspiring Place – APRIL 2014 meeting. 	<p>APRIL 2014</p> <p>Stephen Fullarton to meet with Inspiring Place regarding further discussion on beach access.</p> <p>Executive assistant to email Consultation Response Sheet to committee members.</p> <p>Committee members to complete and return Consultation Response Sheet as soon as possible.</p>	<p>Complete</p> <p>Complete</p> <p>Complete</p>	
4	Phillip Island Nature Parks Update	ACTIONS	STATUS	
4.1	<p><u>Phillip Island Visitation</u></p> <p>Comment: Jane Daly reported that she had seen more self-guided FIT visitors (free independent travellers) on the island.</p> <p>Response: The CEO advised that the FIT market is growing stronger. The Chair acknowledged the Marketing Manager (Nicoleta Giurgiu) and benefits for the Cowes township. The CEO expanded on increased work in China including two</p>			

	<p>representatives in Shanghai and Beijing.</p> <p>Comment: Jane Daly asked if the representatives in China were staff or agents.</p> <p>Response: The CEO confirmed that the representatives were agents.</p> <p>Comment: Pauline Taylor asked if the Nature Parks had plans to employ agents in other countries.</p> <p>Response: The CEO advised that other markets are allocated to specific staff within the marketing team.</p> <p>Comment: Michael Whelan asked if the Nature Parks promotes/sells with partners.</p> <p>Response: The CEO advised that Nature Parks works with partners (including packages). There are also secondary deals with FIT dealers.</p> <p>Comment: Paul Smith asked if there were any studies completed or in progress regarding use of the coast by different cultures.</p> <p>Response: The CEO advised the visitor profiling may be available from Council.</p> <p>Comment: Stephen Davie commented that information may also be available from Tourism Victoria.</p>		
4.2	<p><u>Port of Hastings (POH) Development</u></p> <p>The CEO advised that development of the work scope regarding the consultancy for the Port of Hastings Development Authority is in progress. The Nature Parks' un-manipulated data will be made publically available. The consultancy will commence over the next few months.</p> <p>Comment: Michael Whelan asked if it is a paid consultancy and of it is associated with Porticipate.</p> <p>Response: The CEO advised that Porticipate completely separate, is an environment consultative group which acts as a conduit of information.</p> <p>Comment: Patsy Hunt expressed her disappointment that only "notes" regarding the Porticipate meetings were available and not the minutes.</p> <p>Response: Environment Manager to pass on feedback to POH.</p> <p>Comment: Michael Whelan made negative comment regarding the Porticipate Terms of Reference.</p> <p>Comment: Margaret Hancock asked if the consultancy was only on penguins and seals.</p> <p>Response: The CEO confirmed that this is the case and advised that modelling on other animals such as sharks, whales and dolphins as well as environmental modelling for the project will be completed by other organisations. The Nature Parks will liaise with these organisations throughout the process.</p> <p>Comment: Mike Cleeland enquired regarding monitoring of seagrass.</p> <p>Response: CEO – The POH are looking at replicating the "Shapiro" report and then addressing any gaps.</p>	<p>Environment Manager to pass on feedback to POH regarding distribution of Porticipate meeting "notes", not the minutes.</p>	
4.3	<p><u>General Update (Chief Executive Officer)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visitation to the Penguin Parade is at 575,000 (40,000 up YTD which is a record for the Penguin Parade). The Chinese market continues to increase. • The Board has approved its Annual Budget and Business Plan for the coming financial year (2014-15). • The Conservation Management Plan for Churchill Island is commencing soon as a priority and the Board has allocated additional funding to progress Stage 1 of the Key Area Plan for the precinct. • The Board has discussed final considerations regarding shortlisted tenderers for architecture and design for the Nobbies Project and is deliberating on a preferred tender subject to contractual terms. • The new Nature Parks boat is currently under construction in QLD with the new boat tour on schedule for its launch in December 2014. • Thank you to committee members for your input into consultation regarding the South and North Coast Key Area Plan. Consultation included 86 attendees representing 26 organisations and the local community. The draft is now in progress by Inspiring Place and is on schedule for delivery to community on 8th October 2014 (open community session). Comment: Michael Whelan commended the specialists who provided the consultative briefing on the Coastal Processes Study on 3rd June 2014 to local stakeholders. This study will assist the development of the Key Area Plan. • The Penguins Plus Project feasibility study is in progress, for Board decision on completion. 		

	<p>Comment: Jane Daly enquired regarding the current admission price for Penguins Plus.</p> <p>Response: The admission price for Penguins Plus \$46. The upgrade includes a ranger talk, hot drink, and a separate platform viewing experience (capacity is more restricted).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The CEO advised that there had been no allocation in the Federal Budget 2014-15 towards tourism (Summerlands Business Case). <p>Comment: Michael Whelan asked if the business case is available online website.</p> <p>Response: The CEO advised that the Summerland Master Plan is available on the Nature Parks website.</p>		
4.4	<p><u>Proposed Smiths Beach Surf Life Saving Structure</u></p> <p>The Nature Parks and Department of Environment and Primary Industries (DEPI) has received drawings of the proposed new surf life-saving structure at Smiths Beach. The Board has discussed the designs and expressed concern (including around erosion issues). The Nature Parks will respond to Cape Woolamai Beach Surf Life Saving Club regarding another possibilities such as the existing Council structure as an alternative location. Both the Board and DEPI are in support of alternative options.</p> <p>Comment: Michael Whelan was in support of an option which is not “obtrusive” and investigation into other alternatives.</p>		
4.5	<p><u>Environment Update - April (Environment Manager):</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work continues on kikuyu across the reserves. Ecoblade contractors are currently on site at Cape Woolamai removing boxthorn. 1100 employees from Shin Kong (company) in Taiwan assisted with planting of tussock grasses over 3 days at Kitty Miller Bay. NAB and AGL volunteers also visited to participate in tree planting at Rhyll Transfer Station. <p>Comment: Penny Manning asked who had organised the visit.</p> <p>Response: The Nature Parks marketing team.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The new fox dogs are progressing well with fresh scats and tracks found along the northern shoreline of Phillip Island. 132 feral cats were removed this financial year. <p>Comment: Michael Whelan asked if any information is known regarding the distribution of feral cats over the island.</p> <p>Response: Not much is known regarding distribution. The Nature Parks focus is on protection of Hooded Plovers and other areas of bird habitat along the coast.</p> <p>Comment: Patsy Hunt advised that she is one of nine Bass Coast community members on the Council's new Domestic Animal Management Act Committee “DAMAC” (three are from Phillip Island).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pasty flagged concern regarding composition of committee and enquired regarding representation by the Nature Parks and Parks Victoria. She raised concern that the committee could become “one-sided” regarding the local issue of dogs on beaches depending on the views of individual members. She also raised concern regarding appointment of another consultant regarding the issue of dogs on beaches. <p>Response: The CEO advised that the Nature Parks remains engaged in conversation regarding the issues around dogs.</p> <p>Comment: Deirdre Griepsma (Bass Coast Shire Council) advised that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The committee operates as an advisory committee (does not vote). Various agencies have input into discussions and there is an open invitation to organisations to attend. A consultant has been appointed because Council is revisiting the topic after community feedback that there was inadequate consultation regarding the matter. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8 hooded plover chicks fledged this year. The Nature Parks has received a Coast Care grant which will contribute towards hooded plover (and shearwater) beach signage, beach refuge gear and volunteer equipment. NEXT HOODED PLOVER COUNT: Friday 8th August 2014, meet 8:00am at the Environment Pod. This second and final phase of Exercise Pinguino is now complete. The day/night exercise involved testing shoreline response in the field including the cleaning of oiled wildlife. Development of a detailed report is in progress including development of a training framework utilising learnings from the exercise. Following the success of Pinguino, a further exercise is planned for next year regarding response in the event of wild fire on Summerland Peninsula. Rangers continue work on planned burns as per the Fire Operations Plan 2013-16 targeting kikuyu. 		

	<p>Comment: Michael Whelan asked why the method of burning is used (as opposed to other methods)</p> <p>Response: To remove the “bio-mass” so that herbicide application is more effective and less has to be applied.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The tracks in Oswin Roberts Reserve have now been resurfaced in gravel. This work also assists with fire response. • Ongoing grants include Melbourne Water (wetlands), Ian Potter foundation (fox detection dogs, cameras and equipment). • Removal of pine trees at Five-ways Reserve is in progress (also assists fire response as the trees are combustible and located close to the caravan park). The area will then be revegetated with the assistance of FoK and other volunteer groups. <p>Comment: Joel Geoghegan asked if grant funding for the Ramsar project continues.</p> <p>Response: Yes.</p> <p>Comment: Margaret Hancock enquired regarding the next Cape Barren Goose count.</p> <p>Response: The Environment Manager advised that the count occurs every 2 years (next count: 2015).</p> <p>Comment: Patsy Hunt advised that a hooded plover from Red Rocks had been seen and recorded at Wilsons Prom.</p>		
4.6	<p><u><i>Rabbit Eradication</i></u></p> <p>Comment: Mike Cleeland (President – Phillip Island Landcare Group) advised that rabbits have now been eradicated from Macquarie Island (7-year process) and that there is community support to intensify rabbit eradication work on Phillip Island. Mike enquired regarding the Nature Parks position regarding this. There was positive comment regarding the lower rabbit numbers on Phillip Island due to the combined effort of land managers, local farmers and community groups.</p> <p>Comment: Joel Geoghegan expanded on Landcare’s Rabbit Control Strategy currently in development to be completed by the end of 2014 and the upcoming process of community consultation.</p> <p>It was agreed that Landcare would present on the strategy at the next Community and Environment Advisory Committee meeting regarding Landcare’s Rabbit Control Strategy and that the presentation would be part of the joint meeting.</p> <p>UPDATE: Presentation postponed to October meeting.</p> <p>Response: The CEO confirmed the continued support by the Penguin Foundation for rabbit eradication on Phillip Island. It was discussed that Landcare’s strategy will also include land off Phillip Island within the Bass Coast region with separate sub-strategies for different areas. Possible duplication of strategies was flagged for further discussion.</p> <p>It was agreed that further discussion regarding contribution and support by Nature Parks (and Council) will take place outside the meeting (Jarvis Weston - Nature Parks, Matt Stephenson – Bass Coast Landcare Network, Deirdre Griepsma - Bass Coast Shire Council). Nature Parks and Council are currently represented on the Working Group for the project.</p> <p>Comment: Michael Whelan discussed his view of possible difficulties with eradication of rabbits from Bass Coast but that it could be achieved on Phillip Island.</p> <p>UPDATE: A meeting was held between Bass Coast Landcare Network (BCLN) and the Nature Park to discuss the Rabbit Control Strategy where it was agreed that Phillip Island would have its own sub-strategy. The Nature Park has given BCLN information on what it would like included in this strategy for the Working Group to consider.</p>	Further discussion to take place regarding Landcare’s Rabbit Control Strategy (Jarvis Weston - Nature Parks, Matt Stephenson – Landcare, Deirdre Griepsma - Bass Coast Shire Council).	
	The committees separated to their own meetings at 5:07pm.		
5	Matters Arising and Advice from Committee Members:	ACTIONS	STATUS
5.1	<p><u><i>Friends of Churchill Island Society (FOCIS) – Christine Grayden</i></u></p> <p>Recent works at Churchill Island include resurfacing of paths, removal of the wooden boards at the entrance to the Visitor Centre which was a hazard (this area will become concrete), and work has commenced on the entry road.</p> <p>FOCIS is working with the Nature Parks Communications Executive and Graphic Artist regarding visitor centre signage.</p> <p>Recent donations include a cup, saucer and plate set (hand-painted by Mary Amess and on display in the kitchen), a christening gown, a hand-made shark fishing reel (owned by Ted Jenkins), and an Amess family tree in book form.</p> <p>There has been decline in volunteers guides.</p> <p>Comment: The CEO advised that the Nature Parks would organise some media regarding the decline in volunteer guides. The committee noted that Christine’s position as Curator at Churchill Island had been funded for a further 12 months.</p>	<p>Christine Grayden to discuss the decline of volunteer Churchill Island guides with Danene Jones (Communications Executive).</p> <p>Christine to contact Rebecca Sanders</p>	

	<p>Comment: The CEO raised that the previous study work by Rebecca Sanders (Ph.D. candidate) is critical to inform the project brief regarding the Churchill Island Conservation Management Plan (CMP). Christine to contact Rebecca via email.</p>	regarding the Churchill Island CMP.	
5.2	<p><u>Wallabies and Possums</u></p> <p>Comment: Deborah Holland enquired regarding progress of the Nature Parks study on wallabies.</p> <p>Response: The CEO updated that the study on carcasses (road kill statistics) has been completed. Most carcasses (road kill) on Phillip Island were possums (80%). A PHD student has now commenced the next stage of the study which is based on modelling and effects of wallaby numbers on vegetation. The student will examine stomach material and collect data to assist a population estimate. The study will be finalised within 12 months, when the information/results will be available to the community and passed on to the Department of Environment and Primary Industries.</p> <p>Comment: Deborah Holland raised that the information would be useful for the Phillip Island Integrated Transport Study.</p> <p>Comment: Jade Daly asked if the increase in possums might be due to a decrease in feral cats.</p> <p>Response: The CEO advised that it is unknown at this stage. Comparison data will be available at the conclusion of the study.</p>		
5.3	<p><u>Weeds and Paths</u></p> <p>Comment: Deborah Holland discussed feedback that a lot of tractor work had been observed.</p> <p>Response: The CEO advised that this may be the contractors working on boxthorn and removing pine trees from 5-ways.</p> <p>Comment: Patsy Hunt raised that Robyn and Steve (Koala Park Resort) had enquired regarding new vegetation proposed for the land at 5-ways (after removal of the pine trees).</p> <p>Response: The CEO advised that he had discussed plans regarding revegetation with Robyn and Steve.</p> <p>Comment: Jane Daly made positive comment regarding the recent works by the Nature Parks on paths and tracks.</p> <p>Comment: Michael Whelan raised that he is supportive of linked "Island path/track" and maps for visitors including bike riders. There was discussion regarding linking tracks and the issue of various land managers/owners. Michael asked regarding progress of the South and North Coast Key Area Plan.</p> <p>Response: The CEO advised that the plan is still in draft and that community feedback (including feedback and ideas regarding tracks/paths) has been provided to the consultants. Council is also involved as a key stakeholder.</p> <p>Comment: Patsy Hunt raised that gravel (as a material) on paths can detract from the bird-watching experience.</p> <p>Comment: Michael Whelan highlighted safety and minimal interference with native vegetation as key points regarding paths.</p>		
5.4	<p><u>Coastal Processes Study</u></p> <p>Comment: Michael Whelan commended the recent presentation to key stakeholders by Water Technology on coastal erosion for the Coastal Processes Study. He added that the issue of shared land management is still an issue regarding enforcing regulations for dogs on beaches.</p> <p>Response: The CEO advised that the Nature Parks is currently exploring its remit on unreserved Crown Land.</p> <p>Comment: Steven Davie commented that the toilet at Conservation Hill is smelly and enquired regarding an alternative system.</p> <p>Response: The CEO advised that alternative design principles will be investigated as part of the study.</p>		
5.5	<p><u>Churchill Island Guides</u></p> <p>Comment: Michael Whelan suggested the possibility of compulsory civil service to assist with guides at Churchill Island.</p> <p>Response: The CEO discussed the Green Army Project and its assignments including weed control, revegetation, nesting box construction and vermin control to assist restoration of penguin habitat at Summerland Peninsula. The Green Army comprises teams of ten young environmental trainees who will work on local community-based environmental projects across Australia for six-month periods as part of a new Coalition program.</p> <p>Comment: Christine Grayden made positive comment regarding the Churchill Island house cleaner from Work for the Dole.</p> <p>Comment: Michael Whelan raised concern regarding Work for the Dole's reputation.</p>		
5.6	<p><u>Preserve Western Port Action Group</u></p> <p>Comment: Anne Davie discussed the new "Preserve Western Port Action Group" (a subcommittee of the Phillip Island Conservation Society). She advised that there will be a workshop (Phillip Island, 29th July 2014) to develop a range of scenarios</p>		

	<p>to assess Western Port's environmental values and their contribution to the economy of the area. Environmental specialists from the Australian National University will be present as well as key stakeholders and other community groups.</p> <p>Comment: Deborah Holland asked if groups along Mornington Peninsula are involved.</p> <p>Comment: Anne advised that Preserve Western Port Action Group is reaching out as much as possible.</p> <p>Comment: Margaret Hancock advised that the Western Port and Peninsula Protection Council are involved.</p> <p>Response: The CEO advised that the Nature Parks is keen to be involved.</p>		
5.7	<p><u>2015 Shearwater Festival (22 & 23 November 2014)</u></p> <p>Comment: Anne Davie discussed planning in progress for this year's event including key highlights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parade in the main street of Cowes (environmental and Indigenous culture). • Workshops in Cowes Cultural Centre • Involvement by local schools. 		
5.8	<p><u>Heritage Listing for Summerland Peninsula</u></p> <p>Comment: Patsy Hunt enquired regarding progress of the heritage listing application for Summerland Peninsula.</p> <p>Response: The CEO advised that the application for the 2013-14 year has been lodged (awaiting outcome). Heritage Victoria has noted the national heritage values of the Peninsula.</p>		
5.9	<p><u>Community Open Day 2015</u></p> <p>Comment: Steven Davie provided an overview on the 2014 event de-brief (including a doubled attendance over last year). Planning has commenced for the 2015 event to be held on Sunday 1st March 2015.</p>		
5.10	<p><u>Potteroo Photo</u></p> <p>Comment: Steven Davie discussed a photo he had taken of an animal at his home in Cowes which was initially thought to be a potteroo. The last known sighting of a potteroo on Phillip Island was in the 1980's.</p> <p>NOTE: After further discussion, the animal in the photo has been identified as a rat (most likely a Black Rat).</p>		
6	Other Business		
6.1	Nil.		
7	Next Meeting		
7.1	<p>The Chair thanked members for their contribution. The Chair acknowledged the Board, CEO and management team.</p> <p>The meeting was closed at 5:41pm. The next meeting will be on Thursday 28th August 2014 at 4:00pm.</p>		