

Community and Environment Advisory Committee Minutes



Meeting held: 4:00pm, Thursday 30th October 2014 at the Education Pod (Summerlands)

1		Welcome & Apologies	
1.1	<p>The Chair declared the meeting open at 4:11pm, acknowledged the traditional custodians of this land and paid respect to the elders past and present. Attendance / Apologies are listed below:</p> <p>Environment Committee: Andrew Paxton (CHAIR and Board), Tim Ealey, Penny Manning, Tania Maddigan, Gavan O'Connor, Mike Cleeland, Diana Whittington (for Deirdre Griepsma), Joel Geoghegan.</p> <p>Community Committee: Stephen Davie (ACTING CHAIR and Board), Margaret Hancock, Christine Grayden, Patsy Hunt, Stephen Fullarton, Michael Whelan, Anne Davie.</p> <p>In Attendance: Kevin Love (Board), Matthew Jackson (Chief Executive Officer), Ash Reed (Senior Ranger), Stu Murphy (Fox Manager), Matt Stephenson (Landcare), Hayley Smith (Executive Assistant - Minutes).</p> <p>Apologies: Stella Axarlis (CHAIR and Board), Bessie Tyers, Jan Fleming, Dr Roz Jessop (Environment Manager), Jarvis Weston (Ranger in Charge), Deborah Holland, Jane Daly, Pauline Taylor, Paul Smith, Gill Hardman, Cr. Kimberley Brown, Louise Parsons.</p>		
2		ACTIONS	STATUS
2.1	<p>The minutes of the Community and Environment Advisory Committee (joint) meeting held 28th August 2014 were accepted as a true and correct record with one minor amendment. **Margaret Hancock was present, not an apology. Moved: Christine Grayden Second: Penny Manning</p>		<p>Executive Assistant to amend minutes of the meeting held 28.8.14 and finalise.</p> <p>Complete.</p>
3		ACTIONS	STATUS
COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE			
3.1	<p><i>Friends of Churchill Island Society (FOCIS) – Christine Grayden</i> RAISED JUNE 2014 ACTION: Christine Grayden to discuss the decline of volunteer Churchill Island guides with Danene Jones (Communications Executive). NOTE: Christine Grayden is in discussions with Danene Jones regarding media.</p>		Complete.
3.2	<p><i>Fox Strategy (Phillip Island Nature Parks Integrated Pest Mammal Strategy 2013-2018)</i> RAISED AUGUST 2014 ACTION: Executive Assistant to check that the fox strategy is available on the Nature Parks' website and send link to Christine Grayden. NOTE: The strategy is now available on the Nature Parks website.</p>		Complete.
3.3	<p><i>Signage at KCC</i> RAISED AUGUST 2014 ACTION: Patsy to see if she has a photo of the 'Gift to the Nation' sign and report back. NOTE: Photo was unable to be located. A detailed description has been provided to management and it will be followed up.</p>		Complete.
3.4	<p><i>Friends of Churchill Island Society (FOCIS) Christine Grayden</i> RAISED AUGUST 2014 ACTION: Christine Grayden to show film of working horses at Churchill Island at the October 2014 meeting.</p>		Complete.
ENVIRONMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE			
3.5	<i>Woodlands Habitat Management</i>		Scheduled for

	<p>RASIED OCTOBER 2013</p> <p>ACTION: Environment Manager to present an overview of the constraints and expected outcomes from the Woodlands Vegetation Management Plan and Fire Mitigation Plans to the next Environment Advisory Committee meeting.</p> <p>NOTE: Deferred due to absence of the Environment Manager, then joint meetings in 2014.</p>		December 2014 meeting.
3.6	<p><u>Mangroves</u></p> <p>RASIED OCTOBER 2013</p> <p>ACTION: Mike Cleeland and Bessie Tyers commented on the invasion of mangroves into saltmarsh at Rhyll Inlet and north of Newhaven and noted that the causes of the invasion could be a topic that the Nature Parks' research team could look at, or maybe a potential honours project. Environment Manager to raise with Research.</p>		Complete.
3.7	<p><u>Rabbit Eradication</u></p> <p>RAISED JUNE 2014</p> <p>ACTION: Presentation by Landcare regarding Landcare's Rabbit Control Strategy.</p>		Complete.
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 to the Nature Parks is up 9,700 (year to date) with a busy summer period expected, including Chinese New Year in February. • The Penguin Foundation submitted a grant application for the Google Impact Challenge regarding the Magnetic Particle Technology Project (wand). Out of 354 applications on global projects, the project was selected for the top 10 and was awarded \$250,000 (finalist). <p>Comment: Christine Grayden enquired regarding naming considerations for the project (e.g. Google). (Response: No).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The new Nature Parks boat is scheduled to arrive at Phillip Island next week (week commencing 3 November). It is anticipated that the Nature Parks Eco Boat Tour will be launched in early December. The tour is being provided in partnership with local operator Wildlife Coast Cruises, and will include 1 hour and 2 hour tours of the Summerlands area. • Development of the Churchill Island Conservation Management Plan has commenced, with consultants Lovell Chen appointed to complete the work. Consultation with key stakeholders is scheduled to commence soon. • The Board has now approved the South and North Coast Key Area Plan. The plan will inform future studies and actions for the sites within the plan. Any further feedback or comments regarding the South and North Coast Key Area Plan can be directed to this email address: southcoastplan@penguins.org.au <p>The plan can be found here: http://www.penguins.org.au/assets/About/PDF-Publications/South-and-North-Coast-Key-Area-Plan-PINP14.pdf</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 2014 Penguin Foundation Open Day was held on 25th October at the Nobbies Centre. Members enjoyed many fun activities. A significant amount of penguin boxes were made and trees planted. • Construction of the new stairs at Aussie Track is around 75% complete and the project will be finished prior to Christmas. <p>Committee members received a hard copy of the printed Phillip Island Nature Parks Annual Report 2013-14.</p>		
4.2	<p><u>General Environment Update - Stu Murphy:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Environment team has been busy preparing for the short-tailed shearwater arrival at Cape Woolamai (the birds have now returned home!). Data so far suggests that the birds are doing much better this year. VORG has installed nesting boxes to assist monitoring into breeding success (without disrupting natural burrows). <p>Comment: It was enquired as to if any research had been completed regarding the stomach content of short-tailed shearwaters, and who did the research.</p> <p>Response: A group of dead birds were autopsied around four years ago, with high levels of foreign debris found.</p> <p>Action: Will report back regarding further details.</p> <p>There was discussion regarding recent media around microbeads found in cosmetics/skin care, and effects on the</p>	<p>Environment Manager to source details regarding previous research on stomach contents of short-tailed shearwaters.</p>	

	<p>environment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Five hooded plover nests were found this season and unfortunately, all failed. New signage has recently been introduced in hooded plover areas to assist to minimise disturbance. • There are some small planned burns scheduled this season (weather dependant) prior to the summer fire restrictions coming in. Affected areas include the woodland at the KCC and Oswin Roberts (western boundary). The burns are conducted by the Nature Parks team in consultation with the CFA, Bass Coast Shire Council and Department of Environment and Primary Industries (DEPI). • The Ramsar Project is progressing well with funding now confirmed for works over the coming four years. • Weed control and feral cat trapping continues with current focus around the Churchill Island area. • Consultants have been engaged to develop a Vegetation Management Plan and Fire Plan for Observation Point and Silverleaves. Development of the draft has commenced. • Nature Parks Research staff attended Seal Rocks on 9th October to collect scats and other data. The team located and freed four entangled seals during their visit. 		
4.3	<p><u><i>Koala Conservation Centre (KCC) Update – Ashley Reed:</i></u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The KCC team is currently preparing for the annual koala catch_scheduled to take place over the next fortnight. The catches assist to monitor the health of the koalas and collect data. • There are currently no joeys at the KCC. Only one joey has been seen this year which has unfortunately disappeared. • Contractors are currently installing a new sprinkler system at the KCC to provide safety for visitors and to protect the koalas and our woodlands in the event of fire. • The National Parks Association of NSW is conducting a National Koala Count. Interested community members can contact Ashley Reed on 59521307 or areed@penguins.org.au <p>Comment: It was enquired as to data collected so far. (Response: Last year the survey had 900 respondents with around 1600 koalas counted.)</p> <p>Comment: Christine Grayden suggested advertising in the local paper to advise readers what they can do to contribute if they see a koala. (Response: Will raise with the marketing department).</p> <p>Comment: Tim Ealey asked how many koalas are currently at KCC. (Response: Around 40 on Phillip Island, 29 at the KCC).</p>		
4.4	<p><u><i>Fox and Pest Animal Management Update – Stu Murphy:</i></u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The current round of fox baiting across Phillip Island concludes on 8th December. New fish-based bait will be used going into the next phase. Targeted trapping and spotlighting at night will then recommence with baits being replaced during the day with post monitoring by the dogs thereafter. • Fox prints and scats have been detected at Cape Woolamai by Sam and Jazz (the Nature Parks' fox detection dogs). The dogs can detect scats which are up to 3 months old and have covered area of 9.4 square km date. GPS collars are utilised to assist analysing data. <p>Comment: Tim Ealey asked how many foxes are left on Phillip Island. (Response: Less than 10).</p> <p>Comment: Tim Ealey asked regarding problems with the cameras previously used on the Phillip Island bridge. (Response: Technological problems. New cameras will be introduced, along with fencing deterrents to assist to minimise migration).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Tasmanian fox detection dogs and handlers are scheduled to visit in November during the denning phase. • 43 feral cats have been removed from the Nature Parks so far this financial year. <p>Comment: Mike Cleeland enquired as to whether the Nature Parks had or has access to, the first known documented record of the Ramsar coastline created in 1826 (there was a boat visit and walk along the coastline).</p> <p>Response: Unknown, will follow up as it would be a good reference tool.</p> <p>Comment: Penny Manning commented that she had seen cats in the mangrove area near the access to Churchill Island and asked if any trapping was happening in that area.</p> <p>Response: There is trapping happening at Fishers Wetland and near the Boys Home Road.</p>	<p>Environment Manager to follow up regarding historical record regarding the Ramsar coastline (1826).</p>	

5	Presentation: "Rabbit Strategy for the Bass Coast"	ACTIONS	STATUS
5.1	<p>Matt Stephenson (Community Pest Plant and Animal Program Officer, Bass Coast Landcare Network) provided a presentation on Landcare's Rabbit Strategy for Bass Coast. The presentation included discussion on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why a rabbit strategy, the impacts of rabbits, statistics and facts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Highest densities of rabbits are at Ventnor, Newhaven, Cape Woolamai, Surf Beach, Cowes , Kilcunda and Corinella - New hotspots in the BCLN network are Cape Paterson and Jumbunna • Strategy contents and structure • Land areas of focus and challenges • Actions within the strategy and status to date (working group meetings, data gathering and monitoring, National Rabbit Facilitator visit, strategy outline) • About the working group, partnerships and working in collaboration with stakeholders (orgnsiastions, landholders, community, funding support). • Techniques (harbour removal, baiting, shooting, warren destruction, ferreting, biological control, rabbit-proof fencing). • What comes next and future steps. <p>Committee member Mike Cleeland also presented some historical information regarding rabbits on Phillip Island.</p> <p>Comment: Christine Grayden discussed a previous rabbit issue under the Amess House at Churchill Island and that placement of corrugated iron helped with the problem.</p> <p>Comment: Mike Cleeland enquired regarding the effects of rabbit predation on (endangered) orchids.</p> <p>Response: Orchids are a food of choice for rabbits however they like to browse on variety of vegetation.</p> <p>Comment: Steve Fullarton enquired as to the effects on wedge-tail eagles that may eat a rabbit which has the myxo virus or has consumed bait.</p> <p>Response: Investigation into possible secondary poisoning scenarios is in progress.</p> <p>Comment: Christine Grayden raised concern regarding dogs and raptors consuming bait.</p> <p>Response: Mike Cleeland discussed the strength of "Pinzone" bait and that a dog would need to eat 9-10 baits to poison it.</p> <p>Comment: Christine Grayden questioned the time it takes for a rabbit who has consumed bait to die, and how the bait works.</p> <p>Response: The bait is 'anti-coagulant' (causes internal haemorrhaging). After consuming 3 doses, the timeframe is 2-3 hours.</p> <p>Comment: Gavan O'Connor asked whether Pindone is used on French Island. (Response: yes).</p> <p>Comment: Christine Grayden suggested increased fund allocation into feral cat control.</p> <p>Response: Further discussion between authorities regarding collaboration around feral cat control is supported.</p> <p>Comment: Steve Fullarton discussed high costs for home owners in the event of a severe rabbit invasion underneath their home and actions involved.</p> <p>Response: Rabbits eating through electrical wiring underneath houses is also a concern.</p> <p>Comment: Steve Fullarton commented that he has observed many rabbits in pairs in the same places over time, that their movements can become predictable in urban areas and asked what can be done.</p> <p>Response: Pinzone is the most reliable bait for use in urban areas. Tips include: Try to avoid providing areas where rabbits might like to live and fence off where you can.</p> <p>Comment: Michael Whelan commented that there are not many rabbits seen along Coghlan Road.</p> <p>Comment: Margaret Hancock commented that Bluegum Reserve is a rabbit hot spot.</p> <p>Comment: Tim Ealey commented that six rabbits can consume each as much as a sheep and that there used to be rebates for farmers regarding conservation work.</p> <p>Response: There is a rebate currently available through Council.</p> <p>Information: The Land Management Rebate (LMR) provides a rates reduction to landholders with rural land over 4 hectares who complete works that improve productivity and address environmental issues. http://www.basscoast.vic.gov.au/Services/Environmental_Management/Rural_Rate_Rebate_Scheme</p>		

	<p>Comment: Tim Ealey enquired regarding use of the fumigation method.</p> <p>Response: This method is utilised however problems have been experienced in the past regarding burrow destruction.</p> <p>Comment: Mike Cleeland enquired regarding availability of the draft strategy for comment.</p> <p>Response: The draft strategy will be available for comment via the Bass Coast Landcare website in mid-November 2014.</p> <p>If you would like further information, please contact Matt Stephenson on m.stephenson@basscoast.vic.gov.au or on (03) 5951 3327.</p>		
	The committees did not separate and the meeting continued as a joint meeting.		
6	Short Film: Working horses at Churchill Island	ACTIONS	STATUS
6.1	At the end of the meeting, Christine Grayden (Curator, and Secretary of FOCIS) provided a short film to the group featuring footage taken during a visit to Churchill Island by the Heritage Draught Horse Club. The footage showed working horse demonstrations, plus interviews with club members.		
7	Matters Arising and Advice from Committee Members:	ACTIONS	STATUS
7.1	<u>Short-tailed Shearwater Festival – Anne Davie</u> Committee members noted the dates for the upcoming Shearwater Festival (22/23 November).		
7.2	<u>Scenic Estate Update – Diana Whittington</u> Committee members noted that Council had commenced vegetation work in Scenic Estate in preparation for access tracks. Work to install the tracks themselves will commence within the next month. Comment: Mike Cleeland asked if Scenic Estate is included in plans for rabbit eradication. Response: Yes, and other pest animals including cats and foxes. Comment: Christine Grayden commended Council on their work to address the issues regarding Scenic Estate.		
7.3	<u>Landcare Update - Matt Stephenson</u> Committee members noted that sea spurge removal on Phillip Island was progressing well with the help of the Nature Parks, Tafes, Council and many volunteers. If anyone is available to assist, please advise Bass Coast Landcare or Council. Landcare is currently applying for a grant to commence work along the coast toward Melbourne. Comment: Margaret Hancock advised that she had recently met with The Hon. Greg Hunt MP (Federal Minister for Environment) who had encouraged submission of a grant application to the Green Army. There was support among committee members for continued work around removal of sea spurge. Comment: Mike Cleeland advised that he is interested in sourcing historical photos (within past 100 years) showing shore movement and the mangroves moving in closer to shore over time.		
7.4	<u>Micro beads</u> Comment: Michael Whelan suggested that a link to the media regarding micro beads could be shared on the Nature Parks' Facebook page to raise awareness.		
7.5	<u>Churchill Island Update – Christine Grayden</u> Christine displayed some photos from a collection that had been donated to Churchill Island of previous working horse festivals by Mr Ian Crosby. Christine has catalogued the photos which will be on exhibition in the museum. Christine is at Churchill Island on Thursdays and Fridays.		
7.6	<u>Koala Conservation Centre - new signage</u> Comment: Patsy Hunt provided feedback regarding her observations of new signage at the KCC relating to colours, material, messaging, size and positioning. One spelling error was highlighted. The feedback was provided in writing to the CEO.		
8	Other Business		

8.1	<p><u>Meeting frequency and format</u></p> <p>The Chair advised that the Board is currently finalising its meeting schedule for 2015, and discussed meeting frequency with committee members. Some committee members expressed that the current frequency, location and timing is preferred. There was a suggestion that a research report could be included at each meeting.</p>		
9	Next Meeting		
9.1	<p>The committee noted that the CEO would be on leave for 6 weeks (returning mid-December) and that Damian Prendergast will be the Acting CEO in his absence.</p> <p>The committees noted the date of the next regular meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Thursday 18th December 2014, 4:00pm at the Education Pod. <p>The Chair thanked members for their contribution. The meeting was closed at 5:23pm.</p>		