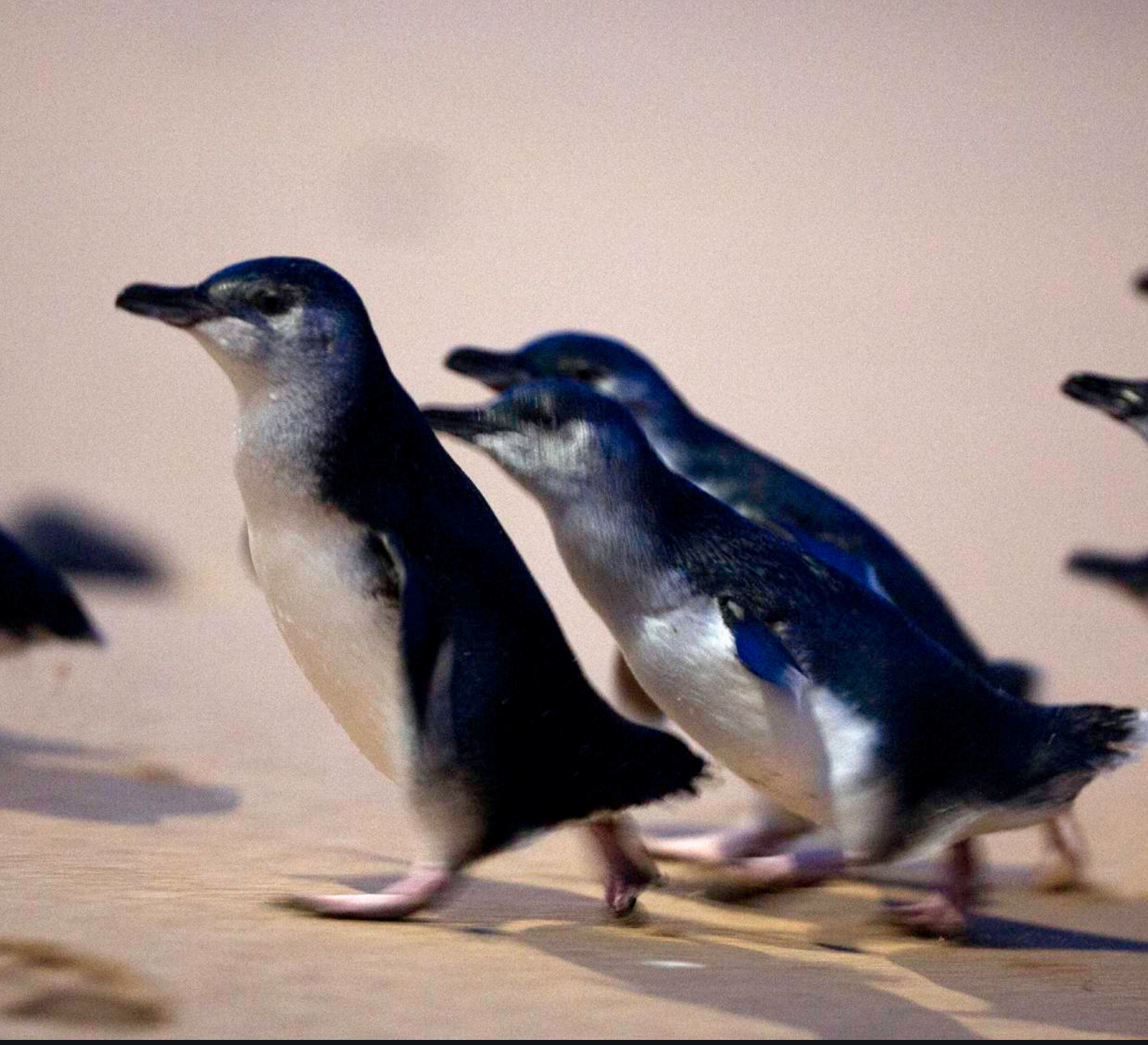


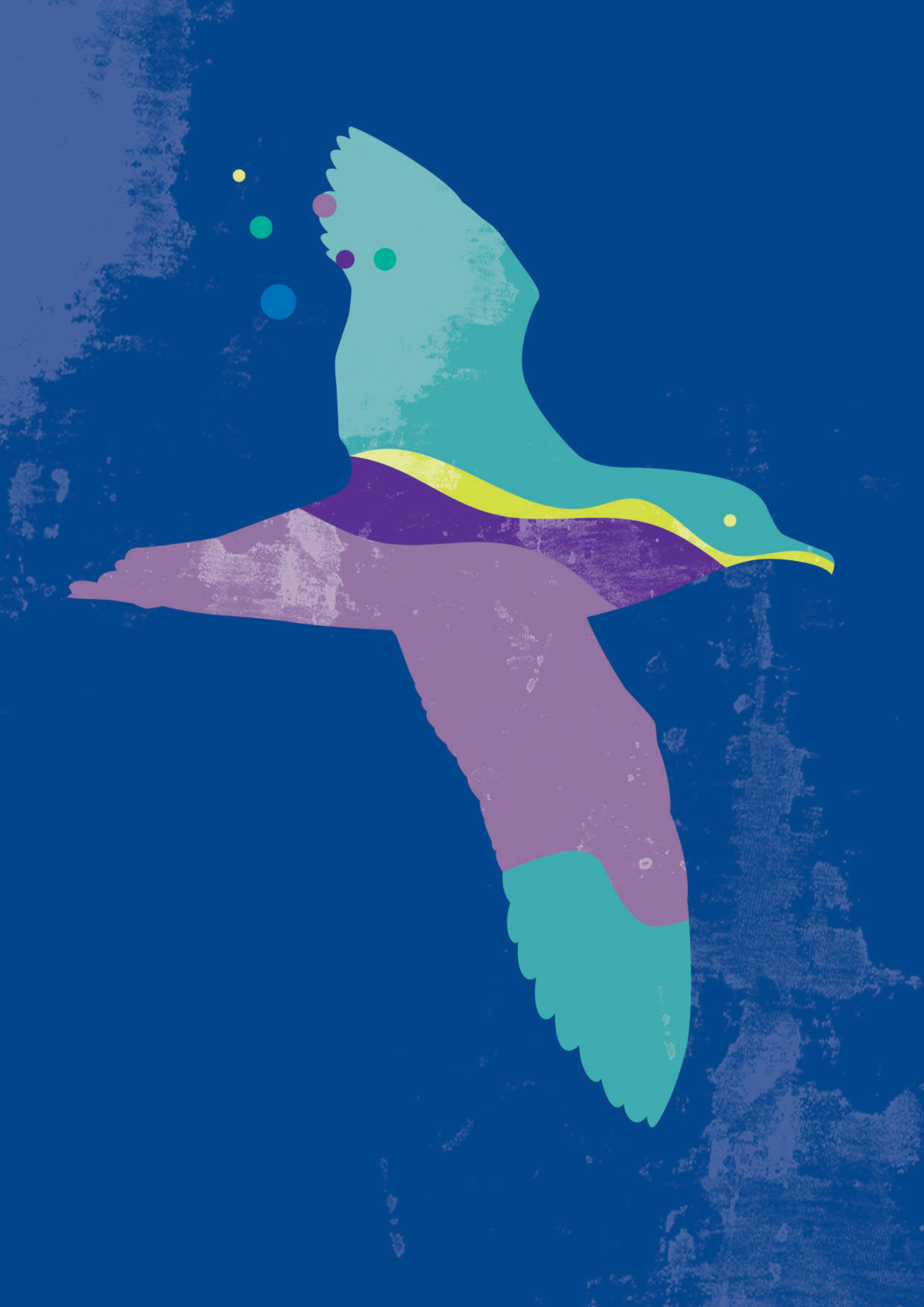
BEYOND THE HORIZON
A 30-YEAR CONSERVATION VISION

Phillip Island NATURE PARKS

March 2019

penguins.org.au

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we live, work and learn, the Bunurong people. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present.



Over the last 50,000 years, our people have adapted to a range of significant changes within their Country... the Bunurong People look forward to working with the Nature Parks to face the challenges of the future.

Womin jeka

Womin jeka (welcome) to Millowl (Phillip Island) - this is Bunurong Country and part of Victoria's Kulin nation. All of our Country is highly significant, every square inch, every rock, every leaf, every dune and every artefact. Our ancestors collected an ocean of information about the Island, on every living thing, every tree, every animal and the key to the complex balance of all things, which our people had managed to evolve and sustain. People today are still learning of the complexities of our ancestors.

The coastline of Millowl contains layers and layers of burnt shell (kitchen middens). Some of these layers have gaps of over 1, 000 years between them, where our people eventually sat directly over the same place again, over 1,000 years later, to do the same thing; make fire, cook food, eat together and tell stories. The whole region is connected by thousands of generations worth of tradition, story and song.

Some of our sites were created at a time when our people could look back over Nerm (Port Phillip Bay) to see a grassy plain with the Yarra River winding its way out to sea over a beautiful waterfall.

The connection we have to this land as a result of this long history is not easy to quantify into words, which usually barely begin to scratch the surface, making all attempts to describe its significance to feel understated; this is no exception.

The Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation [BLCAC] is a large and inclusive organisation that represents Bunurong/Boon Wurrung people, their culture and heritage. We provide a unified voice for our 200 members and support our people's cultural goals and aspirations. Over 2,000 generations of our people have been here before us.

Over the last 50,000 years, our people have adapted to a range of significant changes within their Country. Our stories of the Bay flooding with water, asteroid impacts near Cranbourne, Arthurs Seat once being an Island, volcanic activity in the western suburbs, the great floods, fires and earthquakes all speak of such events. We continue to adapt today reaching high levels of corporate governance and expanding our enterprises

We work with schools, universities, government, shire councils, developers, archaeologists, friends groups, artists, filmmakers, the local community and others in a range of ways to ultimately protect and promote Bunurong/Boon Wurrung culture and heritage. We have a very special relationship with the good folks at Phillip Island Nature Parks, who have respectfully worked together with us for quite some time now. Their unrelenting support has been very humbling for our community. The Bunurong Land Council has been involved in and support this 30-Year Conservation Vision. We look forward to working with Phillip Island Nature Parks to achieve the positive and necessary goals within it.

Dan Turnbull

CEO, Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation

Summerland Peninsula returned to natural habitat for wildlife.

A message from the Minister

Victoria is blessed with unique environments, and plants and animals in their natural habitat. Phillip Island is an important environment showcasing Victoria's biodiversity, providing a haven for unique wildlife that is admired by visitors from around the world.

Phillip Island Nature Parks has demonstrated excellent conservation outcomes over the past decades including the restoration of the Summerland Peninsula, achieving fox free status and supporting the re-establishment of critically endangered Eastern barred bandicoots into the wild.

Despite this, Phillip Island's environment faces major future challenges including adapting to climate change, controlling the effects of a growing population and maintaining the wild populations of land and marine animals and plants amidst increased development pressure and the effects of pollution.

The Andrews Labor Government's Biodiversity 2037 Plan sets an ambitious environmental agenda to prioritise the care and protection of Victoria's natural environment which in turn will lead to greater economic stability and healthier communities.

Phillip Island Nature Parks' 30-Year Conservation Vision - Beyond the Horizon complements Biodiversity 2037 and marks a turning point in the Island's story. This Vision builds on the success and knowledge of the past and commits to conservation using the best available science to deliver long term outcomes.

The objective of Phillip Island being Victoria's Island Haven is crucial and demonstrates the Island's potential to significantly contribute to Victoria's biodiversity into the future, notably with the protection and reintroduction of threatened animal and plant species.

Partnerships will be crucial to our success. Both Biodiversity 2037 and this Vision are not just plans for action, but blueprints for stopping the decline of Victoria's unique biodiversity. As a key partner in this process, I commend this Vision to you and ask you all to support the actions within it to ensure a better future for Victoria's and Phillip Island's environments.

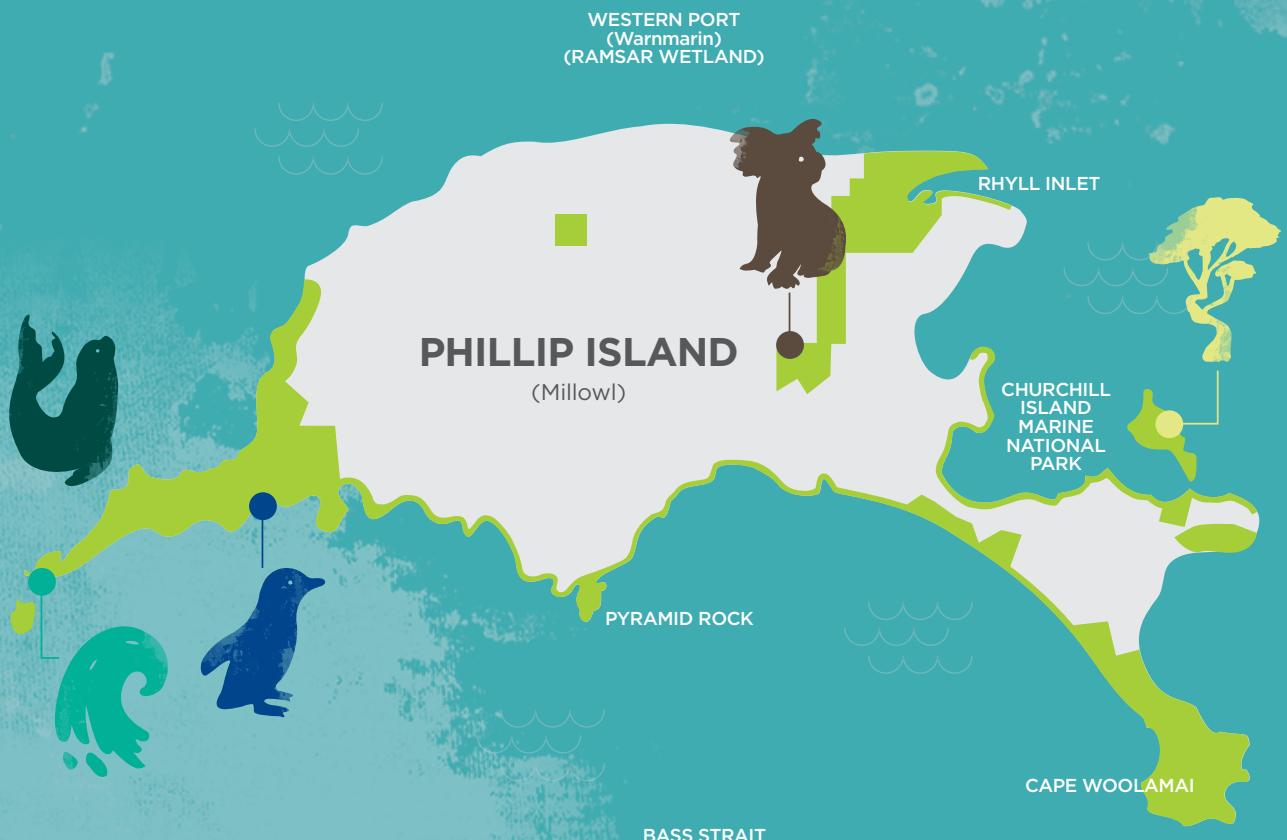
The Hon. Lily D'Ambrosio MP
Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change

Our Purpose

To protect nature for wildlife and inspire people to act.

Our Vision

A place where conservation and ecotourism excellence inspire people to actively protect the environment.



Phillip Island Nature Parks

Route from Melbourne

Maps not to scale

For a more detailed map refer to map LEGL./10-005 via our website www.penguins.org.au

Welcome

Phillip Island Nature Parks (the Nature Parks) is privileged to manage the Crown Land that forms part of the traditional lands of the Bunurong People and acknowledges that the Land, Waters and Sea are of spiritual, cultural and economic importance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. The Bunurong People refer to Phillip Island as 'Millowl' and this vision refers to this traditional name throughout. Phillip Island (Millowl) is also referred to as 'the Island' which it is commonly regarded within the local community.

Achievements over the past 20 years since the Nature Parks was created by the State Government in 1996 demonstrate the power of a shared conservation vision. Triumphs such as the restoration of the Summerland Peninsula and the protection of Little penguins have set the foundation for ambitious wildlife management programs.

We acknowledge the legacy of the conservation vision of many. This spans the thousands of years of care of Phillip Island (Millowl) by Traditional Custodians through to the families who donated land for conservation, Nature Parks staff and the groups and individuals who have given their precious time over decades. We are standing on the shoulders of giants and acknowledge the great responsibility of continuing to honour their work.

We will all share this 30-year conservation vision. This 'we' refers to Traditional Custodians, the Island community, adjoining neighbours, residents, visitors, the local farming and business communities, Nature Parks staff, volunteers, schools and partner organisations. Working together, we can achieve greater success.

We all have a deep affection for the many values of the Island's parks and the challenges facing them. We all have our own stories to tell.

As the Nature Parks develops and manages areas for flora and fauna, this 'we' will work together to ensure that the diverse range of experiences are also upheld and reflected in our work and we will continue to build and strengthen initiatives collaboratively, as partners of a dedicated community.

Securing the future for Little penguins *Eudyptula minor*

"Growing up on the Island has instilled a drive for and interest in, the protection and conservation of the natural ecology. Seeing echidnas and wallabies through areas like Oswin Roberts and Rhyll Inlet was a joy and something sorely missed moving to Melbourne. The scientific research that is taking place at the Nature Parks is fantastic and promising for a secure future for the wildlife. As a recent science graduate, it's great to see research playing a major role in the decision making going forward - not just for the environment, but for employment prospects - allowing for new discoveries and the creation of new tools for the community and world in the future. I'm looking forward to sharing the conservation outcomes of this 30 year vision with my family."

Jeremy Maddigan-Wyatt, Monash University science graduate, grew up on Phillip Island

The future in 30 years, delivered by this conservation vision

As many natural areas around the world are starting to show the impacts of climate change, places such as Phillip Island (Millowl) are being acknowledged as providing a haven for flora and fauna.

In thirty years, the Island's flora and fauna will be flourishing despite the effects of climate change and the pressures of an expanding human population. Under the careful stewardship of the Nature Parks, natural environments will be demonstrating resilience.

Our active management of the natural environment will enable areas to adapt. The Island's landscapes will be drier and the lower lying parts of our coastline, including mangrove tidal shrublands, will have started to move landward as the sea level slowly rises. These marine breeding and feeding areas for numerous species of fish and birds will be accommodated in well-prepared new high tide zones. Similarly, damp melaleuca shrublands will be managed into healthy grassy woodlands.

Homes for our precious wildlife will be maintained, or new ones created and collaborative solutions to living with wildlife have been achieved.

The sounds of Short-tailed shearwaters returning to shore will be heard along greater stretches of the Cape Woolamai coastal environment, while on the Summerland Peninsula healthy populations of Little penguins and Eastern barred bandicoots enjoy their shared moonlit space as they go about their nocturnal nesting and foraging. With the last of the Island's feral cats gone, (re)introduced threatened species such as the Bush stone curlew, have now re-established healthy breeding populations and enhanced the health of our natural ecosystems.

We are humbled to share this 30-year conservation vision. Building relationships and strong partnerships is fundamental and underpins the success of the Island's land and sea conservation programs.

Strong relationships have been formed with Traditional Custodians. Working together has enabled the Nature Parks' approach to land and marine management to be enhanced through the respectful adoption of traditional ecological knowledge.

The Island's viable farming community is supported in achieving balanced economic and conservation outcomes.

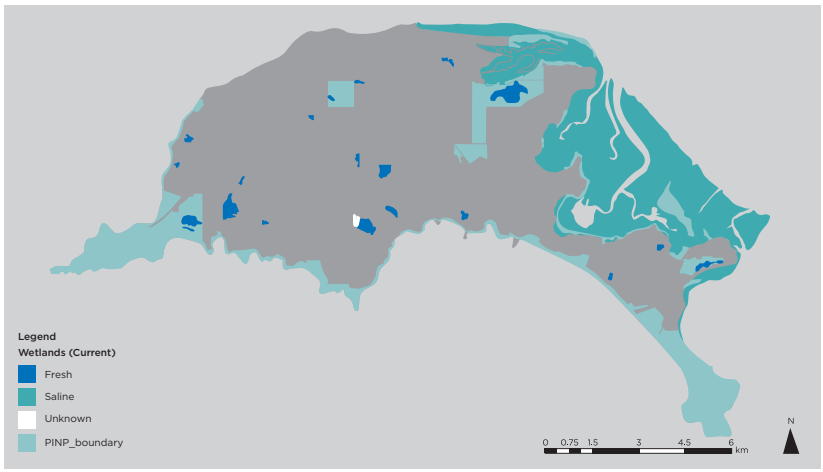
While out in the ocean environment surrounding Phillip Island (Millowl), collaborations with key agencies and the Nature Parks, have led to the protection of the marine ecosystem, safeguarding economic and environmental values for Victorians into the future.

Visitors experience the Nature Parks all year round and are immersed in the natural environment and feel connected and empowered to make a difference. They become strong advocates for conservation in their own lives and communities.

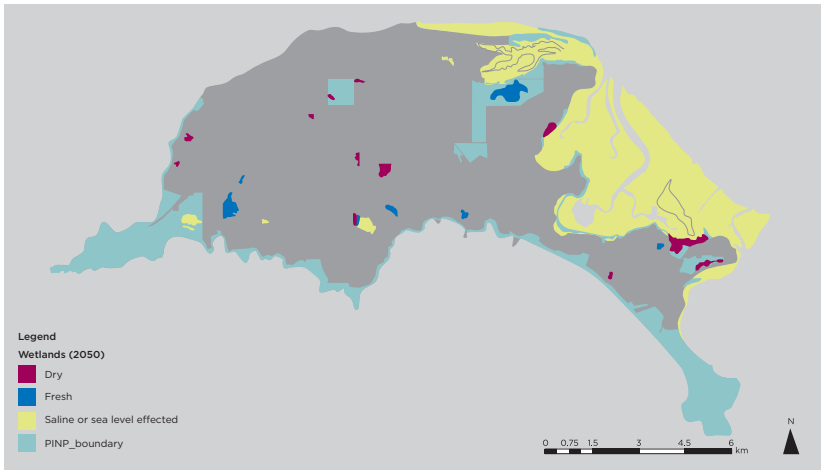
Climate change challenges – now and into the future

Predicted climate-related changes to the flora and fauna of Phillip Island (Millowl) are potentially significant.

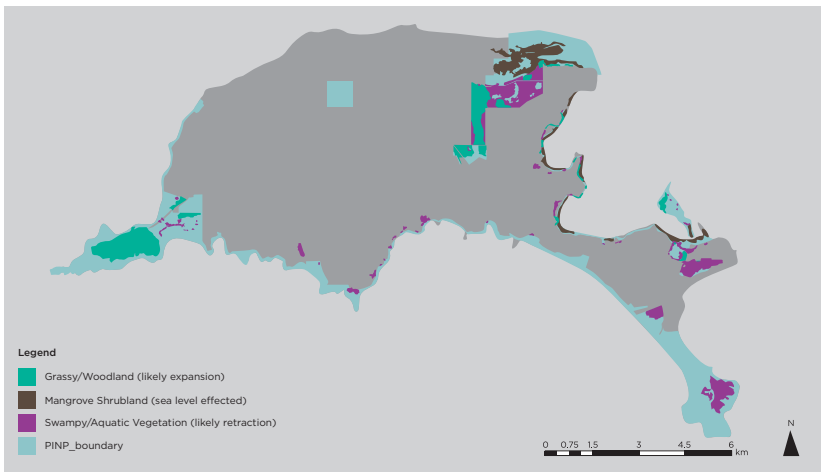
Through the implementation of this vision, the Nature Parks aims to successfully adapt to change and build resilience in our marine and land ecosystems to both short and long term climatic changes in our natural environment through innovative technologies.



MAP 1: Tidal and freshwater wetland areas within Nature Parks' management boundaries.



MAP 2: A projection of climate change effects on tidal and freshwater wetland environments across Philip Island (Millowl) by 2050.



MAP 3: Predicted native vegetation change by 2050 within the Nature Parks.

Grassy woodlands are expected to expand, while swampy or freshwater wetland communities are likely to contract.

Mangrove communities are likely to be affected by sea level rise and are predicted to move inland.

For a more detailed map refer to map LEGL./10-005 via our website www.penguins.org.au

We have developed this vision to ensure resilience and adapt to the challenges of the future

There are few places in Australia that have the unique wildlife, heritage, culture and scenic beauty of Phillip Island (Millowl). The mix of agricultural, urban, coastal, woodland, grassland and marine environments creates a rich sense of place that is loved by locals and visitors alike.

We have developed this vision to drive conservation actions that respect the character of Phillip Island (Millowl), the diversity of its environments, residents, Traditional Custodians and visitor values while being adaptable to a changing climate and other human-induced pressures over the next thirty years.

Challenges - now and into the future

Striking the balance between the actions needed to protect and conserve wildlife and the actions needed to manage the impacts from wildlife presents a challenge for us all. We will work together for viable and creative solutions in line with the Victorian Government's *Living With Wildlife Plan and Biodiversity* 2037.

Since the 1970s, climate change, or the greenhouse effect as it was known, has been discussed in terms of being a future issue. The future is now and climate change is impacting many parts of the world including Phillip Island (Millowl).

Climate change is forecasted to have considerable impacts on the land and marine environments of Phillip Island (Millowl) with flow-on effects to our community and local economy.

On land, the slowly drying conditions and declining soil moisture will create changes in plant and wildlife compositions in the natural areas managed by the Nature Parks.

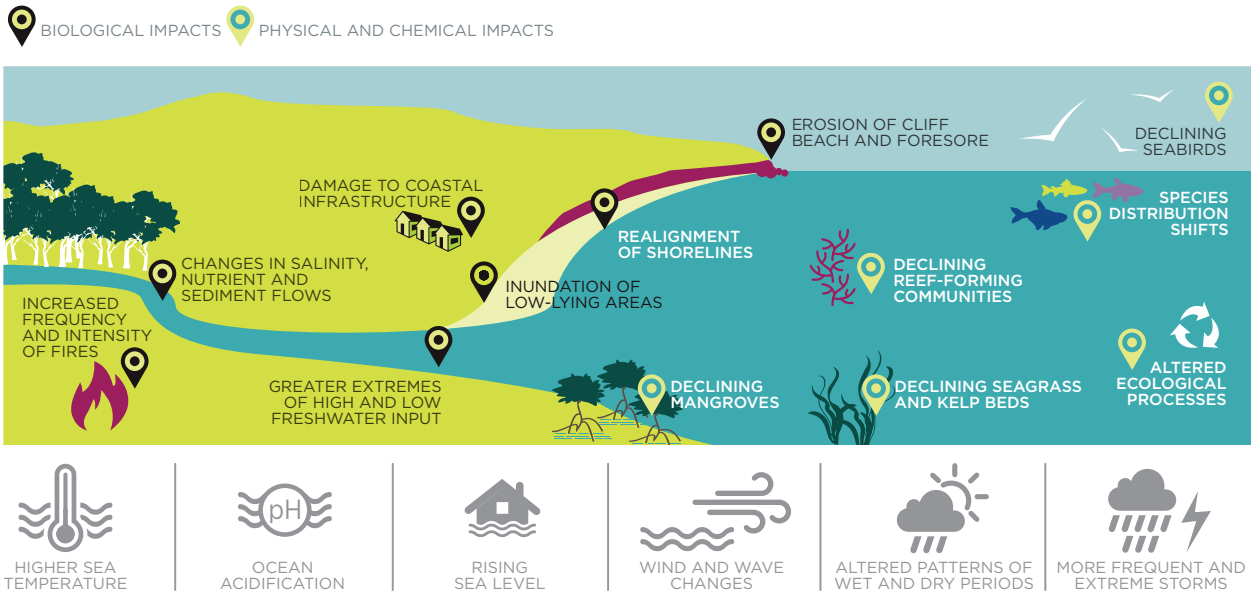
Changes to species diversity may also lower the capability of vegetation and wildlife communities to bounce back from shorter-term shocks like fire, drought and floods. Climate change may also speed up or slow down the movement of invasive plants and animals leading to further impacts on our terrestrial biodiversity.

Rising sea levels are likely to cause more extensive tidal inundation of low-lying areas, while an increased reach and force of waves may accelerate cliff, beach and foreshore erosion. The individual or combined effects of higher tidal inundation and wave impact may lead to the realignment of our Island's shoreline.

Increases in ocean temperatures are likely to lead to changes in the marine food-web and in the distribution of marine species – potentially moving southward in search of more appropriate water temperatures.

Scientific modelling indicates that over the next 30 to 50 years some of Phillip Island's (Millowl's) freshwater ecosystems are likely to become saline or dry out and conditions will no longer support vegetation communities such as swamp paperbark woodlands.

Economic modelling predicts visitor numbers to Phillip Island and San Remo will reach nearly 3.5 million with a 37% increase in resident numbers by 2035.



"I have lived on Phillip Island (Millowl) for over 60 years and in that time have observed and experienced a greater understanding and appreciation of the Island's natural assets.

As a farmer I am aware of the changing conditions that are occurring with climate change and the impact on the flora, fauna and coastline.

The Conservation Vision provides a way forward to inform about the threats to the natural environment and gives a pathway to ensure a future for the Island's precious attributes, now and into the future.

The Vision will engage with people and empower them to be able to make a difference."

ANNE DAVIE: Phillip Island (Millowl) farmer & conservationist

Context

Our actions over the next thirty years will be critical in preparing the Island to deal with balancing changing climatic conditions, increased human population and economic growth. Challenges include hotter and drier weather patterns, increasing extreme weather events, rising sea levels, a growing residential population, visitation pressure, living with wildlife, competition from exotic pest plants and animals, marine pollution and increased fishing.

To help respond to and manage these challenges and create a more resilient Island, the Nature Parks has worked with several agencies and engaged government and community groups to prepare this 30-Year Conservation Vision. Success will come as our team collaborates with Traditional Custodians, scientists, government, local community, agricultural and environmental management experts to achieve the strategic goals detailed in this document.

Over the next three decades, it is our partnerships with Nature Parks' neighbours, the local farming, business and wider community, staff, volunteers, students and leading organisations that are vital to full implementation and resilience of Phillip Island's (Millowl's) nature and wildlife.

The conservation vision and leadership of past community and government programs has provided a strong foundation enabling the Nature Parks to play a leadership role and facilitate collaboration and build on the successes of the past.

This vision supports the *Victorian Government's Biodiversity 2037, Living with Wildlife Action Plan*, current *Victorian Coastal Strategy* and *Victoria's Marine and Coastal Reforms Transition Plan, Marine and Coastal Act* 2018 and guides the Nature Parks' conservation planning, science and actions.

Eastern barred bandicoot released on Summerland Peninsula *Perameles gunnii*

The endangered Bush stone curlew *Burhinus grallarius.* Photograph by Ryan Francis

Our operating principles

The Nature Parks has identified five operating principles which underpin all our conservation work undertaken on the Island:

1. Developing and using the best available science
2. Creating mutual prosperity for nature and people
3. Adopting traditional knowledge into the natural and cultural landscape of Phillip Island (Millowl)
4. Partnering with the community
5. Planning for the impacts of climate change

These principles will shape and guide the way the Nature Parks operates, from the organisation's day-to-day activities, through conducting scientific research, to long-term strategic planning and actions.

The threatened Hooded plover *Thinornis rubricollis*

Our operating principles

1. Developing and using the best available science

All the Nature Parks' work will be informed by the best available science. The organisation's conservation experts will undertake, develop and apply innovative research and technologies to meet the needs of nature and people in a changing world and to stay ahead of new and emerging threats that also include climate change impacts. The effectiveness of all on-ground work will be monitored as part of an adaptive management cycle, to ensure all the Nature Parks' programs are leading to positive on-ground outcomes. The science is shared with others to promote global, evidence-based conservation practices and impacts.

2. Creating mutual prosperity for nature and people

By improving the resilience of the Island's natural environments, the local community will also benefit through increased tourism, viable and sustainable agricultural practice, new business opportunities and enhanced health and wellbeing of residents and visitors. Where possible, the Nature Parks will give residents, schools, businesses, clubs and other stakeholders opportunities to be involved in the development and implementation of on-ground work.

3. Adopting traditional knowledge into the natural and cultural landscape of Phillip Island (Millowl).

The Nature Parks respects the significant value of traditional knowledge and will ensure collaborative relationships integrate this expertise into applied conservation work. Together with Traditional Custodians, the Nature Parks will develop a cultural ecology framework to integrate into conservation planning that, over the life of the plan, will become embedded in all operations.

4. Partnering with the community

The Nature Parks operates within and as part of the Phillip Island (Millowl) community. The organisation understands that the success and longevity of this plan also requires the community to collaborate, support and share the same conservation vision.

The Nature Parks will engage with Traditional Custodians, the Island community, adjoining neighbours, residents, visitors, the local farming and business communities, Nature Parks staff, volunteers, schools and partner organisations to share our conservation journey.

5. Planning for the impacts of climate change

Australia's leading science agency, the CSIRO, has warned that climate change is one of the greatest threats to Australia's biodiversity. The effects of climate change on Phillip Island's (Millowl's) marine and land environments are already emerging. Over the next three decades, the impacts of climate change are anticipated to drive major threats to the biodiversity of the Island by changing land and wetland habitats, increasing sea-level rise and decreasing freshwater areas.

There are many things that can be done to help nature to adapt more easily to a changing climate. Planning for resilience and responding positively to climate change can be achieved on the Island by controlling pressures from invasive animals and plants and promoting species diversity and genetic variation in native flora and fauna.

The Nature Parks will use expert skills and science to help model the potential dispersal and persistence of biodiversity in response to climate change and identify the best techniques to monitor and measure the effectiveness of management strategies. The Nature Parks will continually adapt conservation actions to best meet the needs of the Island's environment in the future.

Our themes

Six key themes will inform the Nature Parks' conservation planning and management actions over the next thirty years:

1. Conserving nature for wildlife

2. Working together to protect our marine environments and coastal interface

3. Leading the way as a global conservation organisation

4. Inspiring and engaging people to act for conservation

5. Rewilding our island haven

6. Skilled partnerships, key alliances and sustainable funding

"Over the 50 years that I have been a member of the Phillip Island community I have witnessed many positive changes which have helped protect and enhance our natural environment.

The creation of Reserves to protect the coastline as well as our native flora and fauna has been wonderfully successful. Parts of Phillip Island are almost unrecognisable from what I remember 50 years ago.

Examples such as the creation of Summerland Peninsula, the Penguin Parade, the Koala Conservation Centre and Phillip Island being included in the National Surfing Reserve network; along with great efforts of Landcare, numerous community groups and volunteers, have all played a significant role in conserving the Island. One highlight was the repositioning of the Woolamai Beach Road, which saved that beautiful beach from relentless erosion.

This 30-year vision will help make sure our natural environment will be in better shape for our children and grandchildren in 30 years' time than it is now and it deserves the support from us all. I support it and look forward to observing and participating in its roll out."

MATT RYAN: Owner and Co-Founder of Island Surfboards since 1969

1. Conserving nature for wildlife

The Nature Parks will further develop our understanding of the marine, freshwater and terrestrial environments of our precious biodiversity. Over the next thirty years, our teams will measure and monitor our progress, enabling us to learn, change and adapt our management actions, as our natural environments change over time.

The Nature Parks will collaborate with Traditional Custodians and the local farming community to use the best available science to manage, improve and adapt habitats for the Island's flora and fauna. The maintenance and improvement of wetlands on Phillip Island (Millowl) is seen as critical for sustaining species in a drier climate. The Nature Parks will focus on building the resilience and diversity of the Island's habitats to assist wildlife and plant communities at risk from climate change.

The future picture:

- Phillip Island's (Millowl's) important townships have been maintained within their 2018 boundaries and are fringed by large expanses of agricultural land and nature reserves. The nature reserves are connected through a network of bio-links which are supported by public and private landholders. Mangroves and other coastal habitats have moved inland as the coastline receded through sea level rise and these outcomes were reached through proactive successful partnerships between the Nature Parks, Bass Coast Shire Council and private landholders.
- Woodland, coastal and wetland habitats are thriving across the Island. The thoughtful and scientifically sound manipulation of vegetation has built climate resilience for the flora and fauna that it supports.
- Weed infestations continue to be eradicated through the co-operation between public and private landowners.
- Phillip Island (Millowl) continues to have a vibrant agricultural community. The Nature Parks has supported this community through research-led wildlife management strategies to achieve a balanced economic and conservation outcome.

The majestic Cape Woolamai surrounded by Bass Strait and Western Port. Photograph by Brian Thorne

Phillip Island's (Millowl's) rugged southern coastline

2. *Working together to protect our marine environments and coastal interface*

The Island's marine and coastal environment is home to a diverse array of unique species. We will work with our partners in government to ensure their protection and management under a changing climate - from the much loved Little penguins and Australian fur seals, colourful reef fish, crabs and shellfish, to our special plants like mangroves which create breeding havens for many fish species.

The survival of the Nature Parks' key marine wildlife such as Little penguins, Australian fur seals and Short-tailed shearwaters depends on the quality of habitat and food availability in areas located outside the Nature Parks' jurisdiction. To protect these species, the Nature Parks will work with partner agencies to conserve all the different environments these animals use during their lifecycles. In some instances, these environments are currently poor quality or at risk of degradation from threats such as land reclamation, unsustainable development, pollution, coastal erosion and the impacts of climate change and ocean acidification.

We acknowledge that changes in the marine environments can be rapid and we are committed to using best science available to guide us. The Nature Parks will protect these environments by facilitating a collaborative network of national and international conservation managers and partner agencies with a common goal of protecting our marine ecosystem and coastal environments.

The future picture:

- Our marine wildlife and environments have appropriate levels of protection, achieved through a collaborative approach between the Nature Parks working with Commonwealth and State Governments, universities and research institutions. Fishing agencies have been actively involved in the legislative change and are now strong supporters for both environmental and economic reasons.
- Increased understanding, legislative change and raised community awareness have reduced the impacts of marine pollution caused by humans.
- Our globally recognised research and advanced technology have prepared us to adapt to change in the marine environment to protect marine wildlife.

Using technology to understand and protect marine wildlife

3. Leading the way as a global conservation organisation

The Nature Parks is a research-led conservation organisation that is internationally recognised and our achievements can be shared to inspire and support conservation efforts beyond our boundaries. The work of the Nature Parks will contribute to global initiatives to protect wildlife and their habitats, particularly seabird and threatened species protection.

Through science, conservation, habitat management and education we will strengthen our global research standing and capacity to inspire people to act. Within the next 30 years, the Nature Parks will become an international leader in island conservation and renowned for expertise and skills which can be applied globally.

The future picture:

- Our scientists continue to attract recognition for Phillip Island (Millowl) as a global centre for conservation excellence. The Nature Parks' scientific expertise is in demand for biodiversity management in a time of rapid change.
- Phillip Island (Millowl) is recognised as a worldwide, exemplary model in coastal habitat protection and renewal. Populations of key and threatened species such as such as Short-tailed shearwaters and Hooded plovers are secured.
- The Nature Parks' internationally recognised penguin research is supporting the global protection of other penguin species. The Nature Parks' partnership with the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) has created international benefits for penguin conservation.

Rewilding the Summerland Peninsula with the critically endangered Eastern barred bandicoot *Perameles gunnii*

Male Australian fur seal at Seal Rocks *Arctocephalus pusillus*

4. *Inspiring and engaging people to act*

Our visitor experiences and education programs have engaged and connected people to the natural environment of Phillip Island (Millowl). Increased awareness empowers and inspires people to act for conservation.

The Island's history is rich in volunteering for conservation and much of today's landscape is attributed to the groups and individuals dedicated to this cause.

The engagement of the children of Phillip Island (Millowl) will be critical to ensure the success and resilience of this plan over the next thirty years and beyond. We will create innovative opportunities for our youth to play an active part in both the development of the science and implementation of this vision.

Volunteer and citizen science programs provide opportunities for everyone to play a part in realising this conservation vision.

Phillip Island's (Millowl's) land and sea environments, native wildlife, agricultural landscapes and world-class beaches enhance the Island community. We acknowledge that our conservation aspirations may not be aligned with everyone on Phillip Island (Millowl). We will aim to work together from the outset towards creative joint solutions.

The Nature Parks' visitor experiences form part of an internationally recognised ecotourism destination that continues to attract and inspire international, interstate and local visitors to be immersed in the Island's natural environments. This presents a unique opportunity to provide highly memorable experiences which inspire people to care and act for nature through innovative behaviour change programs.

The Nature Parks is also well positioned to connect with people at a global level, extending the reach beyond the Island's visitors, and engaging with schools and the broader community to also act for conservation through online initiatives.

The future picture:

- Our use of the best available technology and communications has established programs for virtual visitors from around the world to contribute to our conservation outcomes while enhancing experiences for our real-time visitors.
- The Nature Parks' partnerships with Traditional Custodians have evolved and are recognised for respectfully and demonstrably acting to care for Land and Sea Country through shared roles and values.
- Our Island children are custodians of Phillip Island's (Millowl's) natural environment and will continue to embed strong conservation values into the future generations.
- Inspiring conservation projects are championed by a community of volunteers. Younger generations of this community have adopted the stewardship of Phillip Island's (Millowl's) environment.

Volunteers and rangers engaging in conservation

5. Rewilding our Island haven

Australia is experiencing the highest rate of species extinctions of any landmass during the current extinction crisis. With the eradication of pest animals from Churchill Island, the habitat reclamation and restoration of the Summerland Peninsula, and the removal of foxes from Phillip Island (Millowl), the Nature Parks has demonstrated a commitment to continual reduction of threats and the protection of the Island's flora and fauna.

This provides a significant opportunity for Phillip Island (Millowl) to play a key role in preserving the biodiversity of Victoria. One approach to increasing biodiversity is through rewilding. The success of our rewilding programs will require the Nature Parks and the community to work together, and will require maintenance of a fox free Island, the further reduction of existing threats and the ability to anticipate and respond to new emerging threats.

Over the next three decades, the Nature Parks will work with key stakeholders and in line with other strategic conservation documents such as the *Victorian Government's Biodiversity* 2037 to develop and implement the long-term planning needed to enhance the Island for threatened species conservation. This will help to secure the long-term survival of these species while strengthening the ecological function of ecosystems on Phillip Island (Millowl) and contribute to the Victorian and Australian conservation effort.

The future picture:

- The Nature Parks has worked in partnership with key stakeholders including farmers and landholders to eradicate key threats such as feral cats and has driven the Island Haven vision according to the environmental, social and economic conditions of Phillip Island (Millowl).
- Major threatening processes for flora have been reduced and threatened populations of flora have expanded. No species have been added to the threatened flora list on Phillip Island (Millowl).
- Through a collaborative, multi-agency effort, Phillip Island (Millowl) is part of a network of Victorian Islands which are haven for native flora and fauna and form part of part of the Australian Government's Island Arks program.

The threatened fauna prioritised for re-introduction provide an opportunity for a holistic approach to threatened species conservation. Our 5 keystone species of flora will provide over-arching protection to the threatened vegetation communities they represent, including the endangered Plains Grassy Woodland, Swamp Scrub and Coastal Moonah Woodland.

Species include the Slender pink fingers *Caladenia vulgaris* pictured above.

Threatened Species Prospectus

With an opportunity to re-introduce threatened species to Phillip Island (Millowl), the Nature Parks required a robust and defensible approach for determining the most appropriate species. We worked with key stakeholders and experts to consider positive and negative impacts across areas including tourism, farming and the wider community to prioritise a list of potential species that are threatened in our region. We are excited to begin focusing on the re-introduction of the following fauna species and will continue to work with the community to live with threatened species.

Rewilding

The planned reintroduction of a plant or animal into a habitat from which it has disappeared to conserve biodiversity and restore the health of an ecosystem.

BUSH STONE CURLEW

Burhinus grallarius

Regional Status: Endangered

Closest found: Central Victoria

Main Threats: Foxes, Feral Cats

Photograph by Ryan Francis

The Bush stone-curlew is a large, slim, mainly nocturnal, ground-dwelling bird. Bush stone-curlews have a remarkable courtship dance. They have a wide-ranging diet, but prefer to feed on insects, snails, small lizards, seeds and occasionally small mammals. Their well-known call, a haunting high-pitched wail, was last heard on Phillip Island (Millowl) in the late 1970s.

LONG-NOSED POTOROO

Potorous tridactylus

Regional Status: Near Threatened

Closest found: French Island

Main Threats: Foxes, Feral Cats

Photograph by Leo Berzin

The Long-nosed potoroo is one of the smallest members of the kangaroo family. They are mainly nocturnal, resting during the day in nests made of leaves under dense cover. Potoroos have a semi-prehensile tail that the female uses to carry nesting material. Fungi form a large part of their diet, which also includes tubers, soil arthropods, seeds, fruits and vegetation. The last wild Long-nosed potoroo was seen on Phillip Island (Millowl) in 1980.

GROWLING GRASS FROG

Litoria raniformis

Regional Status: Endangered

Closest found: Gippsland

Main Threats: Loss and fragmentation of habitat, introduced predators and disease

Photograph by Ryan Francis

The Growling grass frog is one of the largest frog species in Australia. The females are almost twice the size of males. They prefer to live amongst reeds, sedges and rushes growing in and along slow moving streams, ponds, lagoons, swamps, lakes and farm dams. They have a unique 'growl' when they call during the warmer breeding months and are indicators of healthy freshwater systems. The last Growling grass frog seen on Phillip Island (Millowl) was in 2008.

SWAMP ANTECHINUS

Antechinus minimus maritimus

Victorian Status: Threatened

Closest found: South Gippsland

Main Threats: Loss and fragmentation of habitat

Photograph by Peter Menkhorst

The Swamp antechinus is a small carnivorous marsupial. It has a highly fragmented distribution in coastal areas, ranging from near Robe in South Australia to Wilson's Promontory in Victoria. Some Victorian mainland populations became extinct in the 1983 Ash Wednesday wildfires. Its habitat includes dense wet heathlands, tussock grasslands, sedgelands, damp gullies, swamps and some shrubby woodlands.

SWAMP SKINK

Lissolepis coventryi

Regional Status: Vulnerable

Closest found: Mornington Peninsula and Western Port Islands

Main Threats: Loss and fragmentation of habitat, Feral Cats, Foxes

Photograph by Jules Farquhar

Swamp skinks, described as 'mini Godzillas', are black and gold with a blue mouth lining. Generally active during the day, they bask and forage in dense, low vegetation up to two metres above the ground. They will readily enter water if disturbed, remaining submerged for considerable periods. Aggressive and territorial, Swamp skinks will shelter in burrows excavated in peaty soil beneath vegetation, and sometimes utilise the burrows of yabbies and crabs.

6. Skilled partnerships, key alliances and sustainable funding

The complexity of modern conservation requires a holistic, strategic and collaborative approach. Strong relationships are essential for sustaining the future capacity of the Nature Parks and the ultimate success of our ambitious conservation vision.

We will partner with organisations that share our conservation values, working together to explore opportunities and achieve significant conservation outcomes. These partnerships will be both at a local level as well as internationally, connecting the Nature Parks to the global conservation community.

It is recognised that whilst the success to date of the Nature Parks has been built upon a strong ecotourism base, we will diversify our business model to secure major funding and sponsorship for conservation initiatives.

The future picture:

- A strong network of philanthropic, corporate and individual funding partners supports the Nature Parks' conservation outcomes.
- Traditional Custodians are resourced and empowered to deliver conservation outcomes on Phillip Island (Millowl) in partnership with the Nature Parks.
- Our integrated ecotourism and conservation model has diversified and expanded to include a prospectus-based investment program that aligns sustainable initiatives with the private and philanthropic sector.

Honouring the land and sea of Phillip Island (Millowl) with a Smoking Ceremony at Cape Woolamai with Bunurong Elder and staff

Staying current for every year of the next 30 years

This vision will be supported by a 5-Year Conservation Plan that is approved by the Board of Management and reported against annually. The vision, science and community support will be monitored and assessed by the Nature Parks through a review process every five years.

Acknowledgements

Phillip Island Nature Parks would like to thank the following key stakeholders for their participation and significant contribution to the development of this 30-Year Conservation Vision by attending Key Stakeholder Workshops.

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community members
- Bass Coast Shire Council
- BirdLife Bass Coast
- Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation
- CFA Bass Coast
- Delaware North
- Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning
- Destination Phillip Island
- Friends of Scenic Estate Reserve
- Landholders
- Parks Victoria
- Phillip Island Landcare
- Phillip Island Nature Parks Staff and Volunteers
- Preserve Westernport Action Group
- Silverleaves Conservation Association
- Smiths Beachcomber Association
- Westernport Water
- Ventnor Coast Care Association Inc.
- Zoos Victoria

30 YEAR CONSERVATION VISION STEERING COMMITTEE

- Liz Stinson – Phillip Island Nature Parks Scientific Research Advisory Committee
- Catherine Basterfield – Phillip Island Nature Parks
- Jessica McKelson – Phillip Island Nature Parks
- Adam Muir – Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning
- Deirdre Griepsma – Bass Coast Shire Council
- Anne Davie – Phillip Island Conservation Society
- Robbie Gray, on behalf of Kellie Nichols – Bass Coast Landcare Network

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Churchill Island Marine National Park

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Mangroves at Rhyll Inlet Wetlands

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