

Community and Environment Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes



Meeting held at 4pm on Wednesday 1 May 2024 the Koala Conservation Reserve, Gurrborra Bik Bik

1	Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners – Welcome, including introduction of new members & Apologies		
1.1	<p>Joint Chairs Patrice Mahoney OAM and Jane Jobe acknowledged the Traditional Owners of Millowl, the Bunurong, and paid respects to their Elders past, present and emerging. The Chairs welcomed attendees, declaring the meeting open at 4.15pm.</p> <p>Members in attendance: Patrice Mahoney OAM (Chair), Jane Jobe (Chair), Gareth Kennedy, Gil Smith, Ron Day, Jill Sutherland, Robyn Holman, Mike Cleeland, Serena Cabello, Penny Manning, Phil Dressing, David Rooks, Simon Woodland, Jess Patman, Jim Kaley, Bill Young, Randall Joseph.</p> <p>In Attendance: Kevin Love (Chair Board), Bev Munro (Board Member), Michaela Salvato (Board Member), Catherine Basterfield (Chief Executive Officer), Jessica McKelson (General Manager Conservation) Dan Kallstrom (Attractions Manager KCR & Churchill Island), Kate Adams (Community Impact Manager), Andrea Cleland (Community Engagement Officer/Minutes).</p> <p>Apologies: Greg Johnson, Terry Nott, Andrew Marston, Shane Livingstone, Robbie Gray, Phil Wright, Alycia James, Doug Waugh, Bradley Johnson, Michael Kendrick Wells, Gayle Seddon, Nick Say, Cheryl Overton, Bradley Janson, Jeff Nottle – (Observer).</p> <p>These minutes reflect the order in which items were discussed and may differ from the order of items on the agenda.</p>		
3	Minutes from previous meeting	ACTIONS	STATUS
3.1	Minutes from the February 2024 meeting were adopted as a true and correct record of the meeting.	Community Impact Manager to finalise minutes and add to - www.penguins.org.au/community	Complete
4	Board Update	ACTIONS	STATUS
4.1	<p>Co-Chair, Jane Jobe provided Nature Parks’ Board update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Visitation to attractions is higher and fuelled by international travellers, combined with strong domestic visitation. – The Board endorsed the new People and Culture-Inclusion and Diversity Policy, which details the organisation’s intentions in relation to people management, inclusion, and diversity. 		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Penguin Parade Boardwalks project scheduled to begin in May and redesign of Penguins Plus in July to make it a better and safer experience for visitors. Further information at Penguin Parade Boardwalks and Viewing Stands Redevelopment » Phillip Island Nature Parks (penguins.org.au) – The Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) is a big part of our commitment to reconciliation and the fourth draft Reconciliation Action Plan (Stretch) June 2024-2027 has been developed. – There has been a review of the Reconciliation Advisory Committee (RAC) to ensure plans are guided by community and Nature Parks is currently seeking First Nations members. – In terms of future planning, we’re working to develop our next long-term strategy, with workshops being conducted with the Nature Parks Leadership group and volunteers, and a workshop was held in February with CEAC members. We will bring collated ideas back to the CEAC at a future meeting. – Tender process of waste services completed and contracts with two companies being developed. This will assist Nature Parks to meet sustainability targets. 		
5	Nature Parks update	ACTIONS	STATUS
	<p>The CEO, Catherine Basterfield provided an overview of the following:</p> <p>Tourism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Across the last six months we have had lots of sell out nights at the Penguin Parade, visitor numbers exceeded 2019 for the first time since the Pandemic. – We formed a new leadership team for Tourism in February with Mark Anderson on board as General Manager. – The 2023 Threatened Species Report is now available – eastern barred bandicoots going extremely well, hooded plover season was good with 10 chicks fledged even though there were low numbers of breeding pairs. – Penguin breeding started slowly but picked up with an average of one chick per pair. <p>Infrastructure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Pyramid rock toilets to be finished very soon after some unexpected delays. – Cowes-Rhyll track is being upgraded in partnership with Bass Coast Shire Council. – Planning for works to upgrade the south coast boardwalks (Colonnades to Surf Beach) is being undertaken to support roll out of repair and/or replacement over time. – Boardwalk Upgrade Project at Penguin Parade will start in May. There will be some interruptions to operations and accessibility over the next six months. The team is working through how to manage this to maintain a good visitor experience. – Guided Tour platform will be rebuilt and made bigger, Penguins Plus viewing stand will be modified to accommodate more seats and made safer, and a new Boardwalk will provide a link from building to the main stands to achieve a looped experience. 	<p>Send survey out to CEAC members</p>	

	<p>Future planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workshops will be held with key stakeholders including community for input into future planning as part of Nature Parks long term strategy. <p>CEAC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The current term of CEAC members is due to finish at end of June. Members will be invited to continue, and the process of seeking membership applications will commence soon. Nature Parks is keen to get feedback from members on their experience and a survey will be sent out in the coming weeks seeking feedback. 		
6	Tourism Update – Koala Conservation Reserve and Churchill Island		
6.1	<p>Attraction Manager Koala Conservation Reserve/ Churchill Island, Dan Kallstrom gave an update on the new Tourism team structure.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Koala Conservation Reserve update on visitation with January extremely busy (1500 people as a record), looking at offering new products such as talks and guided tours in the future. Churchill Island had a busy March period particularly over Easter. New products being developed for Churchill Island - bandicoot tours, guided tours, behind the scenes, extra shows and premium wagon rides. There was a recent sighting of a Powerful owl to the Koalas Conservation Reserve, Nature Parks are working with Melbourne universities to look at habitat for this species. Unfortunately, last week, one of the koala joeys passed away. The cause is not known, postmortem results may provide more information. 		
7	Bush-stone-curlew reintroduction	ACTIONS	STATUS
7.1	<p>The General Manager Conservation, Jess McKelson outlined the journey from 2019 to reintroduce bush-stone curlews on Phillip Island (Millowl) as a long-term program to recover this Critically Endangered species in Victoria. The program involves several key stakeholders including Odonata Foundation.</p> <p>The Committee visited the aviaries to learn about the characteristics of bush-stone curlews and how we are in the final steps of obtaining permits before what's known as a 'hard release' in Spring 2024.</p>		
8	Dark Sky So Shearwaters Fly campaign	ACTIONS	STATUS
8.1	<p>The Community Impact Manager, Kate Adams provided an update.</p> <p>The Dark Sky so Shearwaters Fly Campaign runs from mid April to mid May to support the migration of short-tailed shearwaters chicks from Australia to Alaska. The campaign aims to reduce light pollution to mitigate risk to birds and motorists and asks community to slow down when driving at night.</p> <p>Local residents and businesses in the flight path are encouraged to turn off their outdoor lights and communications include DL flyers, posters, road signage and Facebook event on social media.</p>	Provide link to Shearwater podcast	Complete

	<p>The first 'lights out period saw only one night with birds taking off due to low winds. Winds are expected to pick up after the weekend so Rangers will continue to patrol to rescue birds off the road.</p> <p>Discussion</p> <p>Randall mentioned that the Pen Pals Program with Aleutian Islands was a great initiative. Information at APIA Pen Pals Program - Aleutian Pribilof Islands AssociationAleutian Pribilof Islands Association (apiai.org)</p> <p>Patrice spoke about how there are songlines about shearwaters (moonbirds).</p> <p>International Media</p> <p>Jess noted there had been a podcast on shearwaters aired in Singapore. Details below.</p> <p>All the way from Singapore, Climate Connections host, Kaiting Yeo, chats to Dr Duncan Sutherland about light pollution and why the night lights are so detrimental to the short-tailed shearwaters during migration season. Connecting an online audience to make a difference to reduce light pollution under the "Dark Sky So Shearwaters Fly" campaign.</p> <p>Spotify - Listen here</p> <p>OMNY - Listen here</p>		
9	Group Update	ACTIONS	STATUS

<p>9.1</p>	<p>Bass Coast Shire Council</p> <p>Simon Woodland spoke about the draft Urban Roads and Drainage Improvement Policy – available on the Engage Bass Coast website. This is a good way to find out information about Council including budget. Visit Home Engage Bass Coast</p> <p>Council is making progress on Urban Forest Strategy and soon to launch an interactive online tool (Forest Tree) to see the canopy grown and see/register significant trees. Shaping our urban forest approach Engage Bass Coast</p> <p>An Environment Fund aims to accelerate habitat restoration in the Shire, managed through a single entity, this will be a long-term strategy and provide opportunities for organisations and community to apply for funds to support restoration projects.</p> <p>Destination Phillip Island</p> <p>Serana Cabello spoke about the ‘We love Phillip Island (Millowl)’ Summer campaign that aimed to create a way for visitors to give back. The campaign formed a strong alliance between the Penguin Foundation and Phillip Island Landcare and although there was minimal take up, the team learnt a lot and will consider this for any future campaigns.</p> <p>The Island Whale Festival is on 5,6,7 July with the Festival Hub at Berninnet and activities at other locations. More details to come.</p> <p>Phillip Island Business Network</p> <p>Jess Patman spoke about how the \$5 positive impact purchase incentive at Wildlife Coast Cruises is going very well and the tree planting will be done as a team building exercise</p> <p>PIBN run a ‘Business for Good’ event which included guest speakers and stalls with a focus on sustainability, it was a great opportunity to network and celebrate the efforts made by local businesses.</p> <p>Westernport Water</p> <p>Gareth Kennedy outlined that bridge works continue and are marching towards the middle of the bridge, so far very few disruptions and works will continue until October.</p> <p>Cowes Waste Treatment – the floating wetland initiative has potential to uptake nutrients and contaminants in the water. Looking to expand the trial in Corinella.</p> <p>Other works include the meter replacement program, annual clean-up of pipelines, and infiltration at Surf Beach and Sunderland Bay to identify illegal storm water connections.</p> <p>Island Voice (Phillip Island Progress Association)</p> <p>Ron Day spoke about RACV road hazard survey website My Country Road can map hazards on the road. Survey available at Have your say on the safety of Victoria's regional roads RACV</p>		
<p>10</p>	<p>General Business</p>		
<p>10.1</p>	<p>Next meeting date is 7 August 2024.</p>		

11	Close of Meeting		
	Meeting closed at 6pm		