



Community and Environment Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes



Meeting held at 4pm on Thursday 15 October 2022 online

1	Welcome and Apologies		
1.1	<p>The Co-chairs opened the meeting at 4:05pm</p> <p>Members in attendance: Patrice Mahoney OAM Chair (Board Member), Jane Jobe Chair (Board Member), Michaela Salvato (Board Member), Jeff Nottle, Gayle Seddon, Terry Nott, Bill Young, Jess Patman, Serena Cabello, Gareth Kennedy, Ron Day, Jake Hariss, Simon Woodland, Linda Cuttriss, Penny Manning, Brad Janson, Jim Kiley, Phill Dressing, Robyn Holman Michael Kendrick Wells.</p> <p>In Attendance: Kevin Love (Chair Board), Catherine Basterfield (Chief Executive Officer), Dr Duncan Sutherland (Deputy Research Director), Peta Wittig (General Manager, Tourism Operations), Holly Dowsett (PR & Communications Manager/Minutes).</p> <p>Apologies: Jessica McKelson (Conservation Manager), Sarah Hain (Community Engagement Officer), Shane Livingsstone, Cheryl Owens, Jill Sunderland</p>		
2	Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners		
2.1	The Co-chairs acknowledged the Traditional Owners of the land on which the meeting was taking place, the Bunurong.		
3	Minutes from previous meeting	ACTIONS	STATUS
3.1	Minutes from the June 2022 meeting were approved as read.	Community Engagement Officer to finalise minutes and add to - www.penguins.org.au/community	
4	Board Update	ACTIONS	STATUS
4.1	Co-Chair, Jane Jobe provided Nature Parks' Board update: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nature Parks' Board met today and was joined by the Westernport Biosphere's CEO. The two organisations discussed key strategic initiatives and potential opportunities for collaboration. 		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visitation to Nature Parks sites had been strong due to a successful September school holiday period with some sell out nights. • The Board reviewed its fire risk ahead of 2022-23 fire season and received a progress update from the Conservation team on mitigation measures in place. • The Board received an update on the Penguin Parade Boardwalks and Viewing Stands Redevelopment project. In May it was announced that the Nature Parks application to the Regional Tourism Infrastructure Fund (RTIF) was successful, and the State Government provided a commitment of \$5M towards this project from this fund. Detailed designs for the whole development were completed and endorsed by the Board in August 202. • An update on the organisation's progress against its Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) was received and the Board was pleased to hear of the delivery of two successful events for National Sorry Day and NAIDOC, the finalisation of the Nature Parks Aboriginal Employment Strategy and the creation of four designated Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander roles, with recruitment underway. • The Board confirmed its intention to renew its RAP. • The Board noted progress on the Threatened Species Plan, noting the successfulness of the Eastern Barred Bandicoot Recovery program and planning for the future release of Bush Stone-curlews. 		
5	Nature Parks Update – CEO, Conservation Manager	ACTIONS	STATUS
5.1	<p>Nature Parks Update, Chief Executive Officer (CEO)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CEO reported on progress of the Penguin Parade Boardwalks and Viewing Stands Redevelopment project and noted that another update for the CEAC would be scheduled in December 2022. The Committee noted its interest in the project and receiving further project updates. • The CEO reported on visitation and the positive signs that forecast the regions tourism recovery. • The CEO reported on recent resourcing challenges, noting this was a shared experience amongst many businesses in the Bass Coast region. 	The Community Engagement Officer to schedule update for December meeting.	
5.2	<p>Conservation update, Deputy Research Director</p> <p>The Deputy Research Director reported on the following items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservation update would be circulated this week • Retirement of Nature Parks Research Director, Dr Peter Dann after more than 41 years. Peter would continue to be involved in Nature Parks projects, supervising research students. • Bush Store-curlews – two pairs at KCR. The presence of eggs indicate they are doing well in their habitat. • Hooded plovers – successful last season, now entering new season • Eastern Barred Bandicoots – the teams continue to monitor spread across Phillip Island. The species is doing very well. Local residents and visitors can help by reporting sightings via https://ebb.natureparksresearch.com.au/sighting/ 	Community Engagement Officer to circulate the Conservation News.	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shearwater habitat improvement has been occurring in the preparation for their return • Threatened plants at Bushbank – great progress • SealSpotter high participation across multiple countries • The fox was captured and no further signs have been noted of any other foxes. The team continues to monitor. • Surf Beach Sunderland Bay Biodiversity Project – near completion including alterations <p>Threatened Species Plan update can be accessed via the below links: https://www.penguins.org.au/assets/Conservation/Environment/PDF/Threatened-Species-Update-2019-20-WEB.pdf https://www.penguins.org.au/assets/Conservation/Environment/PDF/Threatened-Species-AR-2021.pdf</p> <p>The Deputy Research Director advised on the species of frogs found on Phillip Island and provided avenues for further information regarding the range of other frog species. The Australian Museum app – reviews recording of frogs and helps identify species. iNaturalist https://www.inaturalist.org/ and https://www.frogid.net.au/</p> <p>A question was asked with regards to the potential for hybridisation between introduced and indigenous species of pigface and if the species should be removed to prevent hybridisation. The Deputy Research Director advised that the Bushbank Nursery Coordinator may be able to provide further insight.</p>	<p>Conservation Manager to coordinate answers on these questions from the Conservation team</p> <p>The Community Engagement Officer to coordinate responses to questions.</p>	
6	Community Engagement Projects – PR & Comms Manager	ACTIONS	STATUS
6.1	<p>Surf Beach Sunderland Bay Biodiversity Project The Nature Parks CEO thanked the Surf Beach Sunderland Bay Coastcare Group who led this project, and reported the following:</p> <p>To protect significant coastal vegetation and cultural heritage in this area from the impacts of rabbits, the construction of a rabbit exclusion fence in conjunction with a rabbit control program and targeted revegetation/restoration is now underway. This project is a resident-led initiative, with the support of Surf Beach Sunderland Bay Coastcare Group, Bass Coast Shire Council, Bass Coast Landcare Network, Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation and Phillip Island Nature Parks.</p> <p>After consideration and in response to community feedback, Nature Parks has removed the top two wires from Links Street to the Eastern end where the fence terminates. Nature Parks will not be lowering the fence</p>		

<p>6.2</p> <p>6.3</p>	<p>at any other sections at this stage, as we monitor the progress of the project. Fence completion occurred in October and addressed the openings, reducing access for rabbits. Four echidna gates have been installed, which we have observed the animals using. Another two gates will be installed in October.</p> <p>This is the first stage of the trial, and these areas will be monitored to determine animal traffic and project effectiveness. Several cameras have been set up to assist with monitoring the area. There will also be a targeted rabbit control program both inside and outside the area in conjunction with this project. The CEAC held discussion around the use of the echidna gates echidnas and noted that further project details could be found at the following link: https://www.penguins.org.au/about/local-community/news/biodiversity-project/</p> <p>Sharing Our Shores Local campaign to engage the local community and visitors to raise awareness of the policies and regulations to ensure everyone can enjoy the beaches and to help protect wildlife on our shores (and help our conservation efforts of endangered species on the beaches and dunes). Campaign will include social media, school competition, local signage at beaches and local media.</p> <p>Celebrating the Eastern Barred Bandicoot Release Thursday 20 October will mark the five-year anniversary for the release of the Eastern Barred Bandicoot to Phillip Island. Since their reintroduction to Churchill Island, the species has spread across the Summerland Peninsula, with sightings as far as Wimbledon Heights, Pyramid Rock, and Surf Beach. To celebrate this remarkable achievement, an exclusive Bandicoot Spotting event is being held next week for Locals Pass Holders, along with media outreach and social media content.</p>		
7	Group Update	ACTIONS	STATUS
7.1	<p>Phillip Island Land Alliance Introduction (PLA)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PICS – Jeff Nottle introduced the PILA, noting that it was created to share information about coast care work being done, connect people and experiences, and that it involves seven groups. • SBSBCG–also a member of PILA, advised that funding is being sought to support groups coming together, special projects around weed identification and management, website development with group pages. <p>Bass Coast Landcare</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ross Trust 3-year program, aim to protect high value biodiversity areas, overall has been well received by residents to date, recording rabbit warrens and plans for control efforts, involves community engagement for private property involvement i.e. prevention, exclusion and control (available to whole PI), further community engagement efforts i.e. stickers to promote, PILA circulation. ‘Teaming Up to Tackle Rabbits’ Project overview attached. <p>Phillip Island Conservation Society (PICS)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservation Society – VNPA (Vic National Parks Association) have run the Great Vic Fish Count for 20 years in Port Phillip Bay. PICS assisted VNPA in getting a grant to run the Great Vic Fish Count off PI for the first time (3-4 Dec). Science behind fish location, movement, identifying fish 		

<p>species and opportunity for local community to be involved and engaged. Encourage PINP to share on social media once location confirmed. https://vnpa.org.au/programs/great-victorian-fish-count/</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council announced community group re: dog issues on Phillip Island. Opportunity to meet and discuss range of issues. First meeting 'dogs off leash' 26 Oct. • PICS provided feedback to ensure other issues covered / terms of reference. • Fed Govt offshore energy feedback i.e. marine impact, seabirds, appearance, location, noise • For Our Future project in development, announcement coming soon with launch event at PINP 5 Nov • Western Port Protection Framework – overarching strategic management plan for Western Port, involves various stakeholders and aims to improve coordinated management and better protect the environment. https://www.actforwesternportbay.au/ <p>PIBN requested a copy of the PICS offshore wind energy submission PICS was unable to clarify a question regarding the exclusion zones re: offshore.</p> <p>Westernport Water</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently this region is at full storage, current focus on handling storm water, no issues at this stage with current weather event • Lodged price submission (available on website), done every 5 years, includes 1 in 5 customer feedback • \$42m capital program planned over 5-year plan - \$20m invested in projects that reduce environmental impact, restorative wetland construction <p>BCSC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of climate action plan – 41/45 actions underway • Waste team performance – increase of 20% to Grantville collection – more people living permanently in area, 50% increase in construction building waste, 100% increase in consumer requests • All of council energy will all be powered 100% renewable • 260k plants, 25 hectares, 500 volunteers • Cowes 300m of east foreshore coastline protect from erosion • Drafting urban forest strategy – promote canopy cover, draft to council late 2022 or early 2023 • Successful funding for electric vehicle charging in Newhaven, • Commercial provider for electric vehicle charging – Cowes and San Remo • Community solar grant – board riders club • Advocating coastal erosion <p>A link was shared to the group: https://theconversation.com/climate-change-threatens-up-to-100-of-trees-in-australian-cities-and-most-urban-species-worldwide-188807</p> <p>Island Voice (Phillip Island Progress Association) Stage 2 road review, unsealed roads are by default 100km/h, hoping for speed reduction, Regional Roads Victoria. PINP Virtual fencing is being analyzed.</p>	<p>PICS to send copy of offshore wind energy submission to PIBN</p>	
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	<p>Preserve Western Port Action Group made enquiries regarding the speed limit review at Kitty Miller Bay. The Nature Parks CEO reported that Nature Parks has responded to the review and the section of road in question was not included within the review. The Nature Parks would be involved in future review stages and could share what was advocated for in that area.</p>	<p>Catherine Basterfield to check if the 60km speed limit consideration was advocated for as part of review</p>	
8	General Business	ACTIONS	STATUS
8.1	<p>The Nature Parks CEO advised the organisation had no active plans relocating car parks at the Nobbies and noted that the Summerland Trail's project (funding pending) would improve pedestrian access at the Nobbies.</p>		
8.2	<p>The Nature Parks CEO advised of the organisations focus on staff retention, highlighting the high volume of internal movements in the organisation, development opportunities and lack of external applications for vacant roles.</p>		
9	Close of meeting		
0.1	<p>The meeting closed at 5.45pm. Next meeting: Thursday 15 December 2022</p>	<p>The Community and Engagement Officer to advise of the venue for the next meeting.</p>	