



NEPEAN CONSERVATION GROUP INC

ABN 44 531 738 131 Reg. No. A0020791U

PO Box 157, Sorrento 3943

www.nepeanconservationgroup.org.au info@nepeanconservationgroup.org.au

NCG Summer Newsheet December 2022/ January 2023

Dear NCG members and friends,

First of all Season's Greetings to you all – we hope you have had a wonderful Christmas celebration with your families and friends, and enjoyed our first real taste of summer. We take this opportunity to wish you a very happy New Year and best wishes for 2023.



We have had so many wren families in our bushland reserves this year – rains and good growth have greatly enhanced their habitat. The female (left) and male (right) Superb Fairy-Wren (*Malurus cyaneus*). Image source: <http://ian.muirhead.name/gallery/birds/heath/superb-fairywren.html>

Nepean Conservation Group's Mission is

To lead and inspire the community to appreciate, recognise, conserve, protect and celebrate the natural, cultural and built heritage of the Nepean Peninsula.

Your 2022 committee elected at the 2022 AGM is as follows:

Ursula de Jong (President), John Atchison (Vice President), Ian Gray (Vice President), Catherine Walker (Treasurer), Eddy de Jong (Secretary); General committee members: Judith Brown, Priscilla Donald, Barend Frielink, Lisa Howard, Shannon Richards, John Trewarne, and Peter Walker.

Contacting us: info@nepeanconservationgroup.org.au

President: president@nepeanconservationgroup.org.au

2023 NCG Committee

The 2023 committee will be elected at our 2023 AGM on Saturday 18 February 2023.

We invite you to consider standing for the 2023 NCG committee. Please send your expression of interest and a short (half page) CV to Dr Ursula de Jong, President:

president@nepeanconservationgroup.org.au

by Wednesday 18 January 2023. Thank you in anticipation.

We look forward to seeing you at the NCG AGM on Sat 18 February 2023 at Point Nepean National Park – we will be celebrating 50 years with you!

This Newsheet has been delayed by my attendance at the combined Society of Architectural Historians of Australia and New Zealand and the Urban History Planning History conference in Auckland New Zealand – the first in person conference for 3 years – just so wonderful to catch up with colleagues face-to-face and to meet new up-and-coming young researchers. This was followed by two weeks holiday in NZ – on the Coromandel Peninsula and the environs of Rotorua. Eddy and I loved the coasts and forests and thermal wonderlands – especially the Waimangu Valley, the youngest geothermal eco-system in the world, where a native forest (bio-system) is re-establishing from complete devastation following the volcanic eruption on 10 June 1886. They have experienced increased rainfall in NZ as we have in Australia and the lake here was 2 metres above its usual level! We were thrilled to see an abundance of nesting dotterels (endangered) and oyster catchers. Here the signs read – No dogs allowed – on the spot fines up to \$900.



A pair of sooty oyster catchers, a familiar stocky coastal bird with a long, bright orange bill, preparing a nest; endangered NZ dotterel (*Charadrius obscurus* or plover) leading us away from the nest. Photos U de Jong

Returning mid-December we have been tied up with family and Christmas preparations. Today, Friday 30 December, I have a beautiful cool afternoon to sit, report, write and compile many interesting bits of material for you to read (and respond to) over the holiday break.

NCG Membership

Peter Walker, the NCG membership officer has a new membership email address:

membership@nepeanconservationgroup.org.au

Please use this address for membership related enquiries.

Membership renewal: due 1 January 2023

The renewal form is attached for your convenience (you may also use it to recruit new members!).

Payment by electronic funds transfer (EFT) is preferred. Bank Details are:

BSB: 633 108 Account No. 163963846

Account name: Nepean Conservation Group Inc.

Please indicate your name and membership type (e.g. T Smith Family/Single) in your payee reference box and scan and email to Peter Walker membership@nepeanconservationgroup.org.au
OR mail application form to the NCG postal address.

Following Victorian State Election, November 2022:

Chris Brayne MP lost his seat of Nepean to Sam Groth, Liberal Party

The *electoral* district of *Nepean* is an electorate of the *Victorian* Legislative Assembly covering the southernmost part of the Mornington Peninsula. The 2020-21 redivision of State electoral boundaries made the following changes to Nepean District. Nepean District lost: 3,701 voters to Hastings District (Balnarring, Balnarring Beach, Merricks Beach and Somers; part of Bittern).

Other news:

The Hon Sonya Kilkenny MP, Member for Carrum, is the new Planning Minister.

The NCG looks forward to working with the State Government to further progress our vision and mission.

Planning matters ongoing

John Atchison and Peter Walker were thanked by the committee for continued vigilance of planning matters on the Nepean Peninsula. The planning matters tracking report was noted with 14 planning applications reviewed and 3 objections lodged during November. Objections are often concerned with high obscuring front fences, vegetation removal, cut and fill construction and lack of landscaping. The report also noted the success in several applications, in having conditions applied for vegetation reinstatement and/ or compensation replanting.

Projects of particular note managed by the Sorrento Coastal Advisory Group included the submission of proposals for Webster's Corner, Sullivan Bay and Western Sister bushland reserves.

Also noted was the feedback given on the Marine Coastal Strategy and the lack of response from Council on the beach cleaning that has been requested for Sorrento's main beach.

MPS BioLinks support grant project

The contractor undertook work over December with much polygala cut and dropped. This work will be completed in February 2023. All residents are to be advised by letter of the work program and its intent and be offered one-on-one/ group advice re living next to a National Park, in late January/ early February.

Guide to Indigenous Plants brochure

This is currently under review with printing planned for February/ March 2023.

SE Water Small Reserves grant project

This is progressing, with works almost completed. S E Water sponsor will attend final working bees in February / March 2023, to work with us and see first-hand what we do.

NCG submission to MPSC green verge/street verge and street protection proposal

This was completed in mid 2022. The Shire has advised that 3,000 submissions have been received including 300 written submissions. These are being collated and reviewed. A new policy is due in 2023.

St Joseph's Primary School children's visit to St Johns Wood Road Bushland reserve

(Western Sister and Rye previously) in association with the NCG on 28 October was a very successful event with the school advising the support offered by the NCG was invaluable and appreciated. The

children undertook planting of indigenous coastal plants propagated by the school at the Briars and were supervised in undertaking general planting and cleaning up of the reserves.



SPN, 2 Nov 2022, p.1. Picture *Yanni*. Kye, Jack, Ursula de Jong, Joseph, Jane Byrne and Sonny

This made the front page of the Southern Peninsula News on Wednesday 2 November 2022 – everyone was thrilled! Especially as we had heavy rain for our morning’s work – and everyone teachers, students, NCG members and Shire contractors undertook the digging and planting in good spirits, working as a great team by the end. We planted over 80 plants – and cleaned up the rubbish as well. Propagating will be undertaken again in 2023 – and so we look forward to developing our partnership further.

Point Nepean National Park

The Committee noted that \$16m of the Federal Government funding for the proposed Climate and Education Centre at Point Nepean (\$25m) has been withdrawn and that the Monash and Melbourne Universities are now considering other funding options.

Camping at PNNP has been delayed by infrastructure requirements and further advice will be provided when this will be up and running. Refer to Parks Victoria website.

Simon Thorning resignation from MPS

The committee recognised the work and contribution of Simon Thorning as leader of the Natural Systems Team at the MPS. His departure from the Mornington Peninsula Shire will be a considerable loss to the community – the NCG has worked closely with Simon over many years and found him a very knowledgeable and reasonable person to work with, sometimes on very difficult projects. The Shire farewelled Simon on 30 November 2022. Unfortunately, the NCG was an apology for this event. We nonetheless thank Simon for all his years of dedication and service to the environment on the Mornington Peninsula and wish him well in his future endeavours. He will be very difficult to replace.

Nepean Advocacy Group

Our six-monthly meeting with MPS Planning officers was held in November 2022 with Ursula de Jong and John Atchison attending on behalf of NCG. The meeting was very positive with key representatives from Shire Departments in attendance. The decision has been made to schedule future meetings quarterly in recognition of the importance and value of the direct communication between community groups and the MPS.

C219

Planning Proposal Amendment C219 was considered at a Planning Panel direction hearing on 21 November 2022 with John Atchison attending on behalf of NCG. The NCG submitted an application to be heard by the Planning Panel at its hearing in 2023. The amendment C219 is to be considered at a formal hearing in February 2023 (14-28 inclusive, with NCG presenting on 23 February) and 7 March 2023. Further advice is being provided by Council to the Planning Panel prior to the hearing. Ursula de Jong, John Atchison and Ian Gray will be attending on behalf of the NCG. This amendment is critical to the future of the Mornington Peninsula – here neighbourhood character and the impact of future settlement patterns and densification on the MP are being considered.

Planning amendment C270

Report from Rosemary West (Coordinator, Green Wedges Coalition) 16 December 2022:

“An application to surround the Moondah Mansion at Mount Eliza in the Mornington Peninsula Green Break (where the Green Wedge meets the bay) with six three – four storey apartment buildings in the guise of a retirement village has two pending decisions:

“An application by Council to rezone this and other SUZ2 land (Amendment C270) to GWZ is awaiting the Minister’s decision; and a VCAT application to overturn Council’s refusal is also awaiting decision.

“Added concerns: Council planners do not seem to have adequately responded to the C270 Planning Panel’s grounds for recommending against rezoning the Moondah site (citing PPN 46) and rezoning several sites including the Portsea and Mornington golf course that are protected by Clause 51.02 as well as the SUZ2 would open them up to residential development. The Mornington Peninsula planning department was the best of the Green Wedge Councils until a few years ago”.

Friends Groups

Friends groups affiliated with the NCG and governed by the NCG MPS MOU

The MOU covers the Shire managed bushland and drainage reserves associated with Nepean Conservation Group Inc. These include:

1. Dimmicks Bushland Reserve. 45 Mungala Crescent and 58 Carslake Avenue Blairgowrie
2. E G Ritchie Memorial Flora & Fauna Bushland Reserve. 36 Summoner Street Blairgowrie
3. Jack Ritchie Track Bushland Reserve. 51 Dana Avenue Blairgowrie.
4. Sid Baker Bushland Reserve. 15 Summoner Street Blairgowrie.
5. Fawkner Avenue Bushland Reserve. 25-31 Fawkner Avenue Blairgowrie
6. Slips Reserve. 11-17 Stringer Road Blairgowrie
7. Tyrone Bushland Reserve. 7-17 Hibiscus Grove Rye
8. Sullivan Bay and the Western Sister, Sorrento, Property Number 127926.
9. Sorrento Foreshore Reserve, off Point Nepean Road
10. Tuckey Track Reserve. 2 Lady Nelson Drive Sorrento.
11. Rye Foreshore Reserve. Off Point Nepean Road, Rye
12. 36 Dana Avenue Blairgowrie
13. 12 Hilltop Avenue Blairgowrie
14. 57 Ridley Street Blairgowrie
15. 12 Arnold Street Blairgowrie
16. 13 Sinclair Street Blairgowrie

17. 10 Dana Avenue Blairgowrie
18. Police Point Shire Park, Portsea
19. Moonah Warren Bushland Reserve, Flinders St, Rye
20. St Johns Wood Road Carpark Reserve
21. St Johns Wood Road Linear Bushland reserve (Melbourne Rd to MPNP)

Over the past few months John Trewarne and Shannon Richards have been visiting Friends Groups. They plan to continue this work over 2023. The intent is that by mid-2023 we will have updated reports on all our affiliated Friends Groups and have a better understanding of their work, plans and needs, as well as up-to-date pictures of their reserves.

This time we feature:

Diamond Bay Friends Group and Friends of Sorrento Foreshore. Both are coordinated by Richard Holland, who met with John and Shannon on 20 September 2022.



L Diamond Bay looking from stairs to the Ocean Bay, plantings occur to either side of the infrastructure; R looking from the PPB to The Baths: Friends of Sorrento Foreshore work on the dunes from left of the restaurant to Webster’s Corner.

Diamond Bay Friends Group

Primary project is regeneration of the land adjacent to the walking track to the beach and increasing the plant mass on the cliff sandbanks/ dunes. Both projects are well advanced. Richard reported some issues with lack of support from Parks Victoria because of no dedicated support worker allocated to the group.

Friends of Sorrento Foreshore

A new Friends group is now fully established and supported by locals. Naturelinks (contracted by MPS) is working with and supervising the group and this assistance has been recognised as essential to the project. The foreshore area is approximately 50m deep and 500m long and stretches from the Baths Sorrento to Websters corner at the end of St Pauls Road. The focus of the Group has been the clearing of the weeds from the banks at the back of the beach. An initial funding grant of \$30k from DELWP, auspiced by NCG, has allowed for paid assistance with the heavy clearing work.

The NCG thanks our volunteers and as always asks if you would consider joining one of our groups to support them in this critical environmental work.

Our ramble on Saturday 22 October 2022 at the Moonah Warren Bushland Reserve Rye coincided with the regular monthly Friends of Moonah Warren working bee. But we did not count on the weather! Given the heavy overnight rain, the Friends Group working bee was cancelled! However coordinators Dennis Toth and Inez Dussuyer were there to meet a small group of NCG “ramblers”.

John Trewarne reports that “We met at the Flinders Street entrance and were immediately impressed with the voluminous clearing of ivy undertaken by the Shire. The Shire had installed ‘Kiss-and-go’ gates at all the entrances ‘to stop motorbikes’ and rubbish dumping in the reserve. Wire fencing around the perimeter is functional. The Friends Group have done some planting of Correas and upgraded the playground.

“We walked through to the Milton Road entrance where the Friends regularly work, as this area has higher quality indigenous vegetation. The Friends have been doing major removal of polygala (a noxious and invasive plant) and as a result ground dwelling and climbing plants such as seabury saltbush and bower spinach are starting to grow in medium to large areas in place of polygala. The area now looking through the Moonahs looks quite ‘pristine’. Also evident were ground dwellers Swainson pea and the running postman with its red flowers. Pleasingly many native birds were audible and visible. The Moonah Warren Friends group has around forty people on their mailing list with a core of a dozen who regularly attend. Overall wonderful achievements are visible for just a few years of hard work.”



A few snaps showing the regrowth of Running Postman and Swainson Pea after removal of Polygala.



The NCG Vice presidents, Ian and John, with the Moonah Warren Friends Coordinators, Inez Dussuyer and Dennis Toth.

OFFICIAL MPNP/PNNP Hooded Plover Update #12 2022/23

Hooded Plover update 24 December 2022

Christmas is upon us, and the beaches are warming up. Thankfully, however, the 'crazy' hasn't quite started - the park has been a lot less frantic than anticipated this week (*ie the week before Christmas*)! It's given our Parks team and the Friends of the Hooded Plover volunteers a good chance to monitor hoodie breeding pairs without huge disturbance, and even find a few new nests in sneaky locations. We now have **18 nests** with speckled eggs between Point Leo and Portsea!!

All current chicks are within cooee of Rye Ocean Beach carpark, and more are due to hatch further west between Christmas and New Years. Rye is one of our busiest visitor nodes, and so to help alleviate parenting stress through what looks to be a warm week ahead, our amazing summer team will warden their territories, to engage park visitors and buy hoodie families space.

The lay of the land:

Nests = 18

- Portsea Farnsworth
- Portsea Franklin Rd West
- Portsea Franklin Access
- Sorrento Coppins Lookout
- Blairgowrie Koonya West
- Blairgowrie Montforts
- Blairgowrie Fowlers
- Rye Heyfield West
- Rye Heyfield East
- Rye Brewsters
- Rye Alison Avenue (**due Christmas Day!**)
- Rye Alison Avenue East Bay
- Rye Carpark West (**due today!**)
- St Andrews Miami Drive
- St Andrews Car Park East
- Gunnamatta SLSC Far East
- Gunnamatta Fingal Track (**due any day now**)
- Point Leo

Chicks = 3

- Rye Big Rock (**x 2**)
- Rye Car Park East (**x 1**)

Fledglings = 2

- Rye Heyfield East
- Gunnamatta Fingal Track East

Hooded plovers are certainly one of our most visible beach birds on the Mornington Peninsula, having carved out their niche on (mostly) high-energy beaches. During the breeding season they venture no further to sea than the rock platforms, and no further inland than the primary and secondary dunes. Park visitors are likely to encounter hoodies on most beaches between Gunnamatta and Point Nepean!

But, they're not our only feathered friends. This week, we thought we'd share some BEAUTIFUL images Mark Lethlean took on his St Andrews/Rye monitoring walk (thanks Mark).



L Hooded plover chick. This one belongs to the Rye Car Park East parents. That little egg hatched later the same day! **R Hooded plover.** How's the beautiful red eye ring up close!



Kelp gull. You can tell them apart from pacific gulls by their beak markings. Kelp gulls have a red smudge on their lower beak, while pacific gulls have red on both lower and upper (like lipstick!).



Great cormorant. Often found sunning themselves at Boags Rocks.



Greater crested terns. Terns nest in large colonies on small offshore islands. They often stop at St Andrews Beach rock platforms for a preen and chat with friends.



Sanderling. Often mistaken for juvenile hoodies at a distance! But they have dark legs (not light orange), and distinctly longer beaks ... which helps when they do this...

OFFICIAL: Coastcare Vic's Summer by the Sea 2023 Program is Now Live

28 December 2022: Coastcare Victoria's annual Summer by the Sea program is back in January 2023 with the theme 'Coastal Connections' – see below – and there's plenty in there to pique your interest.

The program of free in-person and online events kicks off on 4 January and is now live at summerbythesea.vic.gov.au for Victorians to register to attend. With events being held across the state and throughout the summer holidays, everyone can connect with the coast.

The 2023 program highlights include:

- A shoreline shell survey in St Kilda
- Fossil discovery at the Port Phillip Ecocentre
- Educational walks around Werribee South and Point Cook
- Accessible experiences including snorkelling with disability
- Live online events covering topics such as great white shark ecology, places to go snorkelling this summer, a panel on ways to help the coast, and more.

Summer by the Sea is an annual program delivered by Coastcare Victoria with the support of providers including government agencies, local experts and volunteer groups. Summer by the Sea activities will be held on the Country of many Traditional Owners from across the state. Videos will be presented with captions in English and several other languages. Bookings for coastal walks and live online events are essential.

Hope to see you there,
Port Phillip Bay Fund team

NRA December newsletter is attached FYI

The following updates were received 24 December 2022 in relation to the MPS program to remove unauthorised watercraft from Sorrento, Blairgowrie and Rye foreshores.

Jill Sands, NRA Secretary, wrote: After making some inquiries regarding the MPS program to remove unauthorised watercraft from Sorrento, Blairgowrie and Rye foreshores the following advice has been provided by MPS for those who have dinghies stored on the foreshore to access their moorings. We would appreciate you passing this on to any friends who have dinghies stored on the foreshore. We believe the first step will be signs going up in March 2023, advising of the plan to remove unauthorised watercraft.

The MPS understands that many mooring holders leave dinghies on the foreshore as a way to access their moorings. While being an authorised mooring holder does not entitle the holder to leave a dinghy on the foreshore, we acknowledge that there is a long history of this occurring on the Mornington Peninsula.

In accordance with the actions of the Sorrento Coastal and Marine Management Plan 2018, which has been endorsed by Council, existing storage of dinghies on the beach is only permitted if associated with an authorised mooring, until a review of long-term management is completed.

As part of the Watercraft Removal Program, MPS are creating a register of authorised mooring holders who currently store dinghies on the beach to access their mooring and wish to continue doing so until the Shire are able to complete a review of long-term management. Provided your dinghy is added to this register, it will not be removed from the foreshore.

If you would like to be added to this register, please email coastalplanning@mornpen.vic.gov.au with the following information:

- *Full name*
- *Phone number*
- *Email address*
- *Postal address*
- *Dinghy model/make*
- *Dinghy material/colour*
- *Approximate location of your dinghy on the foreshore (e.g. Sorrento foreshore opposite 3177 Point Nepean Road, Sorrento)*
- *A clear image of your dinghy*
- *Parks Victoria mooring permit reference number*

Please note this register will be cross checked with Parks Victoria to ensure only authorised mooring holders can continue to store dinghies on the beach.

The Mornington Peninsula Landcare December 2022 newsletter is available on the following link.

The NCG is a member of the South West Mornington Peninsula Landcare area.

[View this email in your browser](#)



Newsletter December 2022

An important message from Environmental Justice Australia

The NCG supports the work of EJA with an annual subscription. We encourage you to email our Federal Government NOW.

As EJA argues, we have “A once-in-a-generation chance to get this right”.



We don't often get the opportunity to completely overhaul our national environment laws. As environmental lawyers, we know just how urgently it's needed. And at long last, real change is on the horizon.

Following years of reviews and consultation, today (8 December 2022) Environment Minister Tanya Plibersek finally announced plans for a new framework of national environment laws.

While we welcome some important commitments in her plans, there's a long way to go to meet the scale of the environmental crises we're facing. We're concerned this draft plan has some significant gaps and issues that could jeopardise the whole thing.

If done right, these reforms could turn around Australia's extinction crisis – and fix countless other threats to places, plants and animals all at the same time. I can't bear to think about what will happen if we get this wrong.

Opportunities like this don't come around often. [Will you send a quick email to our Environment Minister, calling on her to get this right and make sure our environment laws actually protect nature?](#)

SEND YOUR EMAIL

For 20 years, our environment laws have failed to protect our environment. **Australia is now one of seven countries responsible for the destruction of more than half of the world's ecosystems.**

Australia has one of the worst records for extinction in the world. Our forests are being demolished at the same rate as the Congo and Amazon. Australia has become a global deforestation hotspot.

The new legal framework announced on 8 December could set the early course towards healthy, regenerative and thriving ecosystems.

But as they stand, they don't go far enough to stop environmental damage, protect nature, or end extinction.

Here are six things EJA lawyers believe are an urgent priority for the Minister to get right:

1. The **National Environmental Standards** underpinning our new laws must be independently developed, and apply to all industries from their introduction.
2. Our new nature laws must have a framework that truly values and incorporates the **rights, knowledge and culture of First Nations people**, as the ongoing

custodians of this land for over 65,000 years.

3. These new laws will only work if they are properly resourced – so we need a genuinely independent and well-funded Federal **Environment Protection Agency** (EPA).
4. **Climate impacts must be explicitly included** in **environmental** decision making, recognising the impacts of all climate emissions on nature.
5. **Environmental** decision making affects all of us – so communities must have the **right to participate in and challenge government decisions**, through mechanisms like merits review and third-party independent enforcement.
6. To reach the goal of zero extinctions, our new environment laws must protect nature from the start, and **not allow cash payments or creative accounting to offset destruction**

While these might just seem like words on a page, if we make them into law, they will have a profound impact on all those places we love – from the coral jungles of the Great Barrier Reef, to the towering eucalypts in our native forests – and all of the animals and plants that call this continent home.

Minister Plibersek needs to know there are thousands of people calling on her to do the right thing, and fulfil her legal duty – to protect our environment, and create a new framework of laws that actually work. It's time for nature laws that actually protect nature.

Sending Minister Plibersek a quick email will only take a minute or two.

We've drafted some key points to get you started. Unique, personal messages are always the most impactful. If you can, add a few lines about why you care.

SEND A QUICK EMAIL

Our Environment Minister has set a goal to end extinction. It's an ambitious and necessary goal – and it's time for the Minister to match her actions with her words.

Before it's gone.

We cannot pass up this opportunity. Send your quick email and call for a new framework of nature laws that really work.

Thanks for being part of this, Ellen Maybery, EJA senior specialist lawyer, ecosystems team.

Thank you for supporting Environmental Justice Australia. Fixing our environmental laws has been a cornerstone of EJA's work for years. It's a long and arduous, but transformative, process – and it's only possible with support from people like you. Your donation will power a dedicated team of lawyers to advocate and litigate for nature and community – so all living things can thrive.

We look forward to seeing you at the NCG AGM on Sat 18 February 2023 at Point Nepean National Park – we will be celebrating 50 years with you. Further information follows in January – put the date in your diary!