



## NEPEAN CONSERVATION GROUP INC

ABN 44 531 738 131 Reg. No. A0020791U

PO Box 157, Sorrento 3943

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### **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.

The NCG acknowledges and pays respect to the Bunurong people, the Traditional Custodians of the lands and waters of the Nepean Peninsula.

## **NCG Autumn Newsheet May 2023**

Dear NCG members and friends,

This newsheet comes to you towards the end of Autumn. Eddy and I are still swimming on glorious low tide sunny days with only herons, oyster catchers, cormorants, gulls, hoodies, swallows and the occasional cheeky willy wagtail for company. There are some wonderful people - fellow swimmers - whom we cross paths with who are now new members of the NCG! Other days we hike along the coastal cliffs.



Sorrento Back Beach May 2023 – water still 15oC, refreshing and invigorating! Perfect with sun and little wind. Small fish and occasionally a welcome spa. Photo: Ursula de Jong



The wilder side of Bass Strait Coast May 2023 – high tide, strong southerlies, 5m waves and lots of sea spray. Perfect for a long walk. Photo: Ursula de Jong

I hope that you too have time to enjoy what our Nepean Peninsula has to offer. This place offers me respite and healing. It nurtures mind, body and spirit. It is the reason I and the NCG care for nature and work to conserve and protect it, to build biodiversity, to ensure we have a resilient and thriving environment for our flora and fauna. Nature supports the wellbeing of the whole of our community. Parks Victoria's slogan has never been more relevant than today: Healthy Parks Healthy People.

**Indeed, work for the Nepean Peninsula has at times almost overwhelmed us! Much is reported here in this Newsheet – successes to celebrate, follow up work required, participation invited.**

**Your 2023 committee elected at the 2023 AGM is as follows:**

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

Contacting us: [info@nepeanconservationgroup.org.au](mailto:info@nepeanconservationgroup.org.au)

President: [president@nepeanconservationgroup.org.au](mailto:president@nepeanconservationgroup.org.au)

**We had a very successful NCG AGM on Sat 18 February 2023 at Point Nepean National Park – together we celebrated 50 years of volunteering!  
100 members and friends joined us at Badcoe Hall and 14 more attended online. Nearly 40 enjoyed a picnic dinner on a mild beautiful evening.**

**We have just finished celebrating National Volunteer week 15-21 May – with the theme “the change makers”.**



The Mornington Peninsula chose to highlight seven groups of volunteers on the Mornington Peninsula to showcase the diversity of people who work on the Peninsula and give back to their community by volunteering. The Nepean Conservation Group Inc was one of those groups and featured on the MPS Facebook over the W/E: [Mornington Peninsula Shire | Facebook](#)

Celebrating Volunteer Week, Celebrating local Change Makers! 🎉

👉 For 50 years, the volunteers of the Nepean Conservation Group Inc have been working together to preserve the natural and cultural heritage of the Nepean Peninsula.

👉 For the NCG, environmental advocacy is key to being a Change Maker.

👉 Through Friends' Groups and community education, they help protect and enhance the biodiversity of their unique and fragile coastal areas.

For more information, visit: <https://bit.ly/3M74HGz>

[#OurPeninsula](#) [#MornPenShire](#) [#MornPenTogether](#) [#NVW2023](#) [#TheChangeMakers](#)

The photo we chose was to celebrate the wonderful friendships that form from working in Friends Groups' working bees - here a number of the Friends of the E G Ritchie Memorial Flora Fauna Bushland Reserve – Ursula de Jong, Dan Suffern, Margaret Finger and Judith Brown. It had been a privilege to work together over many years – caring for the environment together and sharing our lives along that journey. Thank you one and all.



## NCG COMMITTEE Meetings

Following the NCG AGM on 18 February 2023, the Committee met on 18 March and 20 May. Our next committee meeting is on 15 July 2023.

### Work updates March to May 2023

#### MARCH

- NCG MPS Council submission regarding the sale of surplus shire land further consideration proposed-will come back to MPSC post June 2023
- NCG budget submission to MPS 2023 budget 15 March 23: *Stewardship of Bushland Reserves - working in partnership with community*, case made for full and continuing funding for all bushland reserves on the Mornington Peninsula
- New Port Phillip Bay Fund 2023-2024 application submitted to follow up the environmental work from Portsea to Rye
- South East Water grant report for small reserves in the Bridgewater Bay precinct completed and submitted March 23
- Stronger communities grant application submitted 14 March 2023. This was a Federal Government initiative and circulated by Zoe McKenzie. The NCG submitted an Expression of Interest for upgrades to our website and social media platforms. The NCG Inc website and Social Media sites require redesigning to better communicate the Group's aims, activities and achievements on the Mornington Peninsula. Increased awareness of the NCG and its activities in the community is critical to enhance engagement with the NCG in its environmental activism and advocacy. We requested \$15,000 (with a quote from a local company). We have been unsuccessful. The NCG committee will now launch a members funding campaign and/ or seek a philanthropist to support this project. Any help or advice would be gratefully welcomed.

#### APRIL

- South East Water new grant application submitted for ongoing environmental work in the Bridgewater Bay precinct \$10k 20 April 23

#### MAY

- Athenaeum – submission to HV May 2023 circulated to all members
- Landcare 2023 – Biolinks 16 May 23 \$20k “Creating Biolinks for Blairgowrie’s Bridgewater Bay habitat corridor: Mornington Peninsula National Park”. This application took 40 hours of work to complete.
- Landcare 2023 - Tuckey Track and Stringer reserves 16 May 23 \$20k “Creating and maintaining resilient Nepean Peninsula habitats: Tuckey Track [Sorrento] and Stringer Reserve [Blairgowrie]”. This application took 30 hours of work to complete.
- As part of these Landcare applications, all applicants had to submit a survey about their group, and **select the best description for our group/network. We selected: Trail blazers** (thriving), which means:

**Our group has its own identity and strives for excellence.** We are the holder of expert knowledge concerning our area. We are clear on what we are trying to achieve and our role in achieving it. We determine the direction of work ourselves first and then seek suitable sources of resourcing. We know who can offer assistance and we tap into them when needed. We strive to ensure that everyone in the district understands our role and is a member of our group. If any of our committee leaves, others will step up and our group would continue to prosper. We actively seek contacts and knowledge beyond our borders.

**While we have some work to do in relation to ensuring everyone in the district understands our role and is a member of our group, the other categories did not adequately represent the NCG Inc. We will share the whole survey with you – and invite feedback from you over June 2023.**

### NCG report DUE DATES

- Sorrento Coast Care Grant report to be completed by 31 May 2023 (auspiced by the NCG)
- Brochure revision and reprint – to be completed with final report due 31 May 2023
- MPS Biolinks grant completed - final report due 31 May 2023
- Port Phillip Bay Fund 2021-2022 extension till 30 June 2023- work to be completed asap

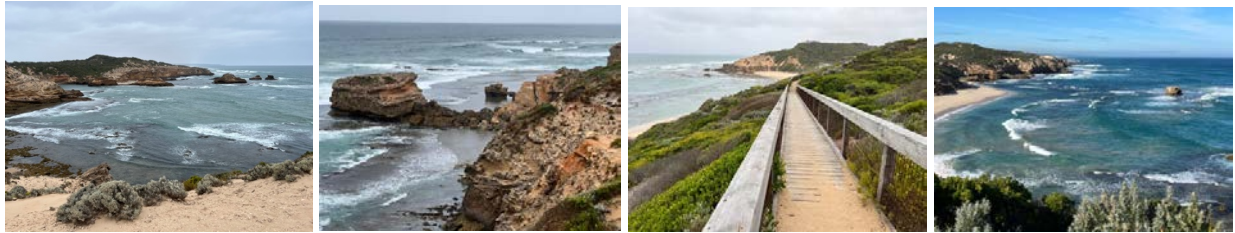
- **NCG RAMBLES**

We had a very successful and well attended ramble on 2 April (Sorrento Foreshore) led by John Atchison and John Trewarne and are planning the next one on the June long weekend (10/11/12 June).

**Please put Sunday 11 June into your diaries. We are going to do a Mornington Peninsula National Park Sorrento Backbeach walk.**

**Meet St Paul's Road, Sorrento, MPNP carpark at 1.00pm. Finish 3.30pm.**

We have invited Parks Victoria and other local groups to participate. Further details will be sent closer to the day.



St Paul's to Sorrento ramble: splendid views along the track – consideration of our environment, our birds, flora and fauna, our natural and cultural heritage and the necessary infrastructure to support hundreds of thousands of visitors each year.

## **NCG Membership**

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

[membership@nepeanconservationgroup.org.au](mailto:membership@nepeanconservationgroup.org.au)

Please use this address for membership related enquiries.

**Welcome to two new members: Laurencia Grant and Helen Botham**

### **Membership renewal: due 1 January 2023**

The NCG works on a calendar year – 1 January to 31 December.

We thank those of you who have renewed your membership. We ask those who have not yet done so to please attend to this matter urgently. The NCG relies on your subscriptions to continue to function.

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](mailto:membership@nepeanconservationgroup.org.au)

OR mail application form to the NCG postal address (PO BOX 157, Sorrento, 3943).

This week I received a wonderful email from someone wanting to “join up”. It read in part:

*“I felt it's time for me to join a Friends group around where our house is here [on the peninsula] ... We divide our time between town and country, so aren't here all the time, but often here on a Sunday morning. ... I'm interested in the bushland care groups around the area ... There's no particular rush here, and I imagine I won't be a constant volunteer, because of things happening up in town, but I'd like to feel I'm doing something!”*

Coming at the end of volunteer week, it made my heart sing! The environment has a new volunteer and the NCG has a new member. Inspired? Talk to a friend, a neighbour about what you do, about what the NCG does – encourage them to come along ...



## Planning matters ongoing

John Atchison and Peter Walker continue their vigilance of planning matters on the Nepean Peninsula, and report to each committee meeting. The planning matters tracking report was noted with on average 12 planning applications reviewed and 2-4 objections lodged each month. Objections are often concerned with high obscuring front fences, vegetation removal, cut and fill construction and lack of landscaping. The reports continued noted the success in several applications, in having conditions applied for vegetation reinstatement and/ or compensation replanting. Following up still needs to be instigated.

Planning highlight: a mature peppercorn tree saved on the verge of 27 Weir Street Rye. New development proposed chopping it down to make a dual carriageway entry for the property. The NCG with the support of the wider community managed to put a case for its retention.

The NCG seeks the help of the community to alert it to any unnecessary destruction of vegetation on the Nepean Peninsula. We are particularly concerned by the clearing of residential blocks for redevelopment.

Vegetation loss continues unabated on the Peninsula.



## Mornington Peninsula Planning Scheme Amendment C219morn Planning Panel's Report

**Available for Viewing:** John Atchison, Ian and Gray and Ursula de Jong attended the 10-day planning panel hearing, 14-28 February inclusive, with NCG presenting on 23 February, and 7 March 2023. The NCG made a presentation and a final response. 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. The Mornington Peninsula Shire Council received the planning panel's report on 8 May, and it is now available to view and download at [www.mornpen.vic.gov.au/Building- Planning/Strategic-Planning/Planning-Scheme-Amendments](http://www.mornpen.vic.gov.au/Building-Planning/Strategic-Planning/Planning-Scheme-Amendments).

Council will be considering the panel's report and deciding whether to adopt (with or without changes) the amendment at a future Council meeting later this year.

Council will notify submitters once the meeting date is confirmed and provide you with information about how to:

- view the meeting's agenda, officer's report and recommendations, and
- register to attend the meeting.

If you have any questions, please call the MPS on (03) 5950 1003 or email [strategic.admin@mornpen.vic.gov.au](mailto:strategic.admin@mornpen.vic.gov.au)

## Athenaeum Theatre Sorrento

On 30 April the I wrote to you all with regard to the Athenaeum Sorrento. As you are aware it has been closed and sold. There is a permit application before Heritage Victoria: "SORRENTO ATHENAEUM (H2227) P36960 for partial demolition and alterations to change the use of the building from a cinema to retail premises". The NCG is concerned about the change of use from communal entertainment to retail, as well as the loss of historic fabric, particularly of the interiors. You were invited to submit a submission to Heritage Victoria. A number of you wrote to us and also to HV. Thank you. Once we have any further information you will be notified.

## **Mornington Peninsula Planning Scheme Amendment C286morn – Council Decision to extend expiry date of interim DDO28**

Planning Scheme Amendment C286morn proposes to apply permanent, mandatory building design controls to the Ocean Beach Road Commercial Precinct in Sorrento to protect and enhance the valued character, heritage, and amenity of the area. The built form controls that currently apply (interim DDO28) are due to expire on the 31<sup>st</sup> July 2023.

We received great feedback on the proposed amendment as part of the public exhibition last year. To ensure sufficient time is available to investigate the issues raised in submissions, on the 4th April 2023, Council resolved to request that the Minister for Planning extend the expiry date of the interim Design and Development Overlay – Schedule 28.

This will ensure that mandatory built form and design controls remain in place for the Ocean Beach Road Commercial Precinct while Amendment C286morn is progressed.

You can view the minutes and officer report with recommendations, as well as a recording of the meeting at [www.mornpen.vic.gov.au/councilminutes](http://www.mornpen.vic.gov.au/councilminutes).

Once the further investigation of issues raised in submissions has been finalised, a report will be brought to a future Council meeting recommending whether to refer Amendment C286morn and submissions to an independent Planning Panel for review and recommendations.

If you have any questions, please call us on (03) 5950 1003 or email [strategic.admin@mornpen.vic.gov.au](mailto:strategic.admin@mornpen.vic.gov.au)

## **Community Local Area Profile: Portsea, Sorrento, Blairgowrie: invitation to contribute**

This document has been developed by the MPS, Mornington Peninsula Community Development Team 2023. It is attached FYI herewith. The purpose of the Community Profile is to provide an easily accessible, holistic plan for a designated geographical area. Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) collector districts are used to enable demographic analysis which demonstrate priorities and needs of local areas. Mornington Peninsula Shire has 44 townships and 17 ABS Local Areas. The ABS collector districts have been merged to enable 13 Community Local Area Profiles for the Mornington Peninsula.

Discussions begin at Blairgowrie – all interested people in the Nepean Peninsula are invited to hear the proposals and have a say in the process and the matters for consideration.

**Join the MPS on Monday 5 June 4pm – 6pm**

**Blairgowrie Community Hall**

**8 William Road, Blairgowrie 3942**

**Be part of your community and contribute.**

## **Dromana Community Networking Forum**

**When: Thursday, May 11 at 6:30-8:30 pm – finished at 10.00pm!!**

**Where: Dromana Community Hall, 2a Verdon Street Dromana**

**Who was invited:** community groups active in Dromana and the surrounding areas were invited to speak at the event. A representative from your group was given an opportunity to introduce your community group to the audience. We would like the community representatives to please present (5 min. max)

**Purpose:** To learn about the extraordinary work local clubs and associations provide and explore opportunities to collaborate and share expertise and experiences; to help grassroots community groups to rebuild and extend their networks, grow membership, and collaborate on the projects that keep Dromana vibrant. This Community Forum was an opportunity to increase community impact and potentially accelerate some of the objectives volunteers are seeking. Needed to know:

- Your organisation's name, purpose and recent successes.
- Your organisation's immediate issues, challenges and needs.
- Your organisation's longer-term vision, opportunities, and contribution to the community.
- How you would like to collaborate with other organisations and how your local representatives can help.

**Ursula de Jong presented on behalf of the NCG – an extraordinary evening – follow ups and further info next issue of NCG Newsheet ...**

## Point Nepean National Park

**Updates:** 1 May 2023 4.00-7.00pm Point Nepean Advisory Group meeting (first meeting since Nov 2022), Admin centre, former Quarantine Station



PNNP glorious May afternoon on 1 May 2023.

**Climate and Education Centre:** the Committee noted that while \$8m of the Federal Government funding for the proposed Climate and Education Centre at Point Nepean (\$25m) has been withdrawn, the Monash and Melbourne Universities have now raised the money and the project is going ahead.

**Camping** at PNNP was extended until the end of Autumn 2023. Located within the historic Quarantine Station precinct, the pre pitched Discovery Tents offer a unique opportunity to camp under canvas within Point Nepean National Park. The standing-height tents are fixed to timber platforms and include basic camp furniture. The campground area features two and four person sites, as well as accessible amenities including hot showers, toilets, and a fully equipped camp kitchen with an outdoor dining area and BBQs. Following feedback and review of the offering, plans are in place to open up stage two of Camping at PNNP by the end of 2023/early 2023. Refer to Parks Victoria website: <https://www.parkstay.vic.gov.au/book-your-stay/point-nepean-discovery-tents>



Images of plantings at PNNP camping sites. Photos thanks to: Gidja Walker May 2023

**General PNNP updates** – discussion around PNNP environmental work, feral animal control and erosion issues impacting the Bay and Bass Strait, particularly at the pointy end.

**People and Parks Foundation:** new project being developed with key strategic locations for potential Moonah Woodland restoration.

**Welcome to James Rose at MPS as Natural Systems team leader**

## Nepean Advocacy Group

22 March NAG meeting. The meeting was very positive with key representatives from Shire Departments in attendance. This was the first quarterly meeting for 2023. More following the June meeting.



**HOODED PLOVER UPDATES (April 2023):** The 22/23 hooded plover breeding season has officially come to an end on the Mornington Peninsula. No late-season twiggy-legged chicks survived to fledging, which means for the second year running, our fledgling count is 5 - one third of what is needed to maintain the local population.

Storm surges and high tides were responsible for the majority of nest (egg) failures this season (48.93%), followed by avian predation (10.64%), canid predation (4.26%) and human interference (2.13%). We were unable to determine 34.04% of nest failures. It is impossible to know with certainty why any of the chicks failed, but many disappeared after storm surge and high tide events and following periods of heat and extreme human visitation.

While fledgling success was low, we approached the season with gusto. Here are some stats that'll make you want to lay an egg:  
>40 hooded plover territories between Somers and Point Nepean National Park were monitored for hooded plover presence and breeding attempts  
33 breeding pairs attempted to raise offspring  
88 nests were witnessed  
156 eggs were witnessed  
61 chicks were witnessed...  
...of which 5 were seen fledge!  
Protective fences and signs were arranged and rearranged >129 times for these nests and chick-raising attempts



1,736 hooded plover observations from the Mornington Peninsula were submitted to Birdlife Australia's data portal by Friends of the Hooded Plover (Mornington Peninsula) Inc. volunteers, Birdlife Australia staff, and Parks Victoria (PV) staff (July 10 2022 - March 31 2023)

Not only did we brave the elements and persistent march flies to monitor our favourite beach-nesting birds, PV staff and volunteers engaged some of the >2.5 million annual park visitors through daily conversations, Junior Ranger and Nippers sessions, and primary school visits. Most excitingly, we developed and launched Hoodie Who? - an activity kit designed to engage young minds with the life cycle and needs of hooded plovers, and amplify our educational efforts across southern Peninsula kindergartens and primary schools.

The NCG thanks the Friends of the Hooded Plover (Mornington Peninsula) Inc. for your unwavering commitment throughout. Your local breeding pair knowledge is truly impressive... as is your ability to speed walk the deep sand of the ocean beaches. Thanks also to Birdlife Australia and Parks Victoria Rangers.

**NRA May newsletter is attached herewith FYI**

**The Mornington Peninsula Landcare May 2022 newsletter is available on the following link: <https://mailchi.mp/46a979c35354/mpln-december-newsletter-5408968?e=26c593851f>**

***Lost our earlier newsletters? Or just want to check something out? Go to [here](#) and all will be revealed.***

The MPS Volunteers newsletter is attached herewith for your information.

What have you got flowering and growing in your garden for our birds?



Correa Alba, Common Correa, Scented groundsel, Coastal Banksia, Coastal everlasting ...  
Autumn is a great time to tidy up your garden, remove weeds early, assess your garden if you need to make any changes, and plan over the next months for Spring.

**We look forward to hearing from you as we continue to celebrate 50 years of caring for our natural and cultural heritage. [info@nepeanconservationgroup.org.au](mailto:info@nepeanconservationgroup.org.au)**

Enjoy our NCG Autumn Newsheet, warm good wishes,  
Dr Ursula de Jong, President NCG Inc  
[president@nepeanconservationgroup.org.au](mailto:president@nepeanconservationgroup.org.au)