



# NEPEAN CONSERVATION GROUP INC

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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 Summer Newsheet December 2023**



## **Your 2023 committee members are:**

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.

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

**Membership renewals for 2024** – thank you to the many of you who have renewed your membership for 2024 – the NCG really values your ongoing support. We look forward to receiving everyone's by 31 December 2023!

## **2024 NCG AGM**

For your diaries: **Saturday 17 February 2024**. At Point Nepean National Park, Badcoe Hall, 3.00 pm for a 3.30 start. BYO everything picnic dinner to follow the AGM.

We are pleased to announce our guest speaker Dr Greg Holland – details will follow.

## **Call for nominations for the NCG 2024 Committee**

Please consider standing for the committee in 2024. Please send expressions of interest with a short CV to the president by Friday 12 January 2024

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

**Moonah Naturewise:** An exciting new project – and an invitation to join in! Moonah NatureWise – refer to attachment. A Moonah Woodland Communities Restoration and People and Parks Foundation 'Live Nature Wise' program: Bringing environmental and human health back together.



**Hooded Plover updates - thank you to Lisa Williams**, Ranger - West - Southern Peninsula Parks & Reserves, South East Melbourne District

Melbourne's weather doesn't know what season it is, but our Mornington Peninsula hoodies do - it's egg laying, chick raising, fledgling claiming season, and the Alison Avenue East Bay parents have just bumped the **fledgling tally** to **3!** The good news had neighbouring hoodie tails a'bobbing, and now 20 breeding pairs are sitting on eggs, awaiting the *\*tap, wiggle, crack\** of their own hatching chicks. We've run out of protective equipment to fence and sign them all!! Millions of visitors flock to Mornington Peninsula beaches over the festive season and through the summer school holidays. With 10 nests due to hatch either side of Christmas, nests and chicks will be extremely vulnerable to human disturbance. To help raise awareness of hooded plover breeding efforts, we're planning for Junior Ranger and Nippers hooded plover sessions. PV's superstar summer rangers are also on the way, and they couldn't come soon enough!

**Here's what's cracking:**

<p><b>Nests = 20</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Point Nepean Borgs Rocks</li> <li>Portsea London Bridge</li> <li>Portsea SLSC West (Farnsworth)</li> <li>Portsea Franklin Rd Access</li> <li>Blairgowrie Koonya East</li> <li>Blairgowrie Fowlers</li> <li>Rye Heyfield East</li> <li>Rye Brewsters</li> <li>Rye Alison Avenue</li> <li>Rye Big Rock</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rye Car Park West</li> <li>Rye Car Park East</li> <li>St Andrews Beach Miami Drive</li> <li>St Andrews Beach Moana Court West</li> <li>St Andrews Beach Car Park West</li> <li>St Andrews Beach Car Park East</li> <li>St Andrews Beach Boags Rocks</li> <li>Gunnamatta Car Park 1</li> <li>Gunnamatta Fingal Track</li> <li>Gunnamatta Fingal Track East</li> </ul>
<p><b>Chicks = 6</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Blairgowrie Koonya West (x 3)</li> <li>Gunnamatta Fingal Track West (x 3)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Fledglings = 3</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rye Heyfield West</li> <li>Rye Heyfield East</li> <li>Rye Alison Avenue East Bay</li> </ul>



**Photo:** The days-old Gunnamatta Fingal Tk West chicks with their parent (photo by Teresa Madgwick, Gunnamatta Beach Leader for the Friends of the Hooded Plover).

**Volunteer insights (Teresa Madgwick):** Chicks typically fledge (fly for the first time) at 35 days old. In the days leading to flying, they stretch their wings, and show off lovely, long flight feathers - see the Alison Avenue East Bay chick stretching in Glenn Ehmke's (Birdlife Australia) image attached!

"Technically, to be fledged, the chick needs to fly 50 metres," Teresa says. Wing stretches were finally observed on day 43, and flight of a few meters at day 45 when the chick dodged an incoming wave. "Given the chick is at day 45, did use its wings, looks healthy, is feeding (and) was not concerned by my presence, I think it is safe to say it has fledged!"





December 2023 Landcare Newsletter link:

<https://mailchi.mp/650489dab3d8/mpln-december-newsletter-5435287?e=26c593851f>

### **Mornington peninsula Shire Council meeting and agenda:**

On Tuesday 19 December the MPSC discussed the Sorrento Foreshore Plan; and the work that the Shire has been undertaking in relation to the impact of State Government Bushfire regulations on the Mornington Peninsula. For your reference:

<https://www.mornpen.vic.gov.au/About-Us/About-Our-Council/Council-Meetings/CouncilCommittee-Meeting-Agendas-and-Minutes>

#### **Sorrento Foreshore Masterplan.**

See Agenda 4.5 p 53

Attachments p 671

#### **Update to Planning Scheme Bushfire Exemptions Mapping Review**

See Agenda 4.7 p 74

Attachments p 593

See page 598 for recommendations.

### **The latest from Breakthrough/ National Centre for Climate Restoration**

#### **COP28 a “tragedy for the planet” as Stockholm Syndrome took hold**

Up to 100,000 people — most of whom derive their professional status and income from climate-related politics, advocacy and business — flew into Dubai for the COP28 annual global climate policy-making event, the Conference of the Parties under the United Nations’ climate convention.

And the result?

An unmitigated disaster. Indigenous people, frontline communities and climate justice groups rebuked the deal as unfair, inequitable and “business as usual”.

At the final session, a weak and incoherent compromise resolution between petrostates and smaller states and advocates — which did not call for the phase-out of fossil fuels — was accepted without dissent and greeted with a self-congratulatory standing ovation, even as Pacific and small island delegates were barred from security from entering the room.

Too many glib responses were variations on the “moving in the right direction, but more needs to be done” mash, with “flawed but still transformative” one classic example.

Within two days the COP28 president, who also heads the Abu Dhabi National Oil company, announced the United Arab Emirates would keep up its record investment in new oil production.

Prof. Kevin Anderson of the University of Manchester described the scene as “the infinite loop of the COP GroundHog days”.

It seemed a form of Stockholm Syndrome again took hold with cooped-up delegates — for decades held hostage to the denial-and-delay tactics of the fossil-fuel producers and the threat of veto from their captured governments — cheering an outcome which will push societies everywhere closer to civilisational breakdown.

Such cognitive dissonance is the COPs’ cultural norm. It is all about a performative outcome regardless of efficacy. Despite dozens of such “successes” over three decades, global emissions are still rising.

The politics is about incrementalism, compromises, deals and “pragmatic realism” which assume that one can negotiate with the laws of nature and mollify an existential risk by such behaviour. Avoiding climate risk, the supposed *raison d’être* for COPs, is neither discussed nor understood by the key negotiators.

Many people with a career in climate policy will celebrate any outcome, because to do otherwise would be to admit to the COPs’ systemic failure, and risk their own professional future.

But many “outside the tent” in Dubai — the scientists, the most vulnerable states, the young activists and the civil society organisations with some spine — did not celebrate; they wept for humanity’s future. Kevin Anderson summed it up: “No doubt there will be lots of cheer and back-slapping... but the physics will not care.”

There were two big items on the agenda: reducing emissions, mainly from fossil fuels, to zero; and finance. On the first, national delegates agreed to “transition away from fossil fuels,” but words about the “phaseout” of oil, coal and gas advocated by civil society and 130 out of 198 participating countries did not appear.

Even then, there were get-out-of-jail cards aplenty. The big one was the acceleration of carbon capture and storage, which the fossil fuel industry claims will allow the production of oil, gas and coal indefinitely, except that the technology does not work at scale.

Then there is the acceptance of “efficient” fossil fuel subsidies, and language around the need for an “orderly” transition which is now impossible largely as a result of fossil fuel industry denialism over many decades.

Climate finance is essential, especially for the developing and most vulnerable nations, through the Green Climate Fund, and a Loss and Damage fund which recognises the historic responsibility of high-polluting nations for the damage inflicted on those who have contributed least to the problem but have disproportionately borne the impacts.

Small island states characterised the national commitments to these funds to date as trivial and disappointing, and Australia’s refusal to support a funding facility for loss and damage as “a deep betrayal and abdication of its responsibilities to its Pacific neighbours”.

From scientists, there was anger and condemnation. They know that after 28 COPs the level of greenhouse gases and coal use both hit a record high in 2023. And they have documented the growing emissions gap and production gap between promises and actions by nations and the plans of the largest fossil fuel producers to keep on expanding production, which the COP has done nothing to practically prevent.

Michael Mann, of University of Pennsylvania said that “the lack of an agreement to phase out fossil fuels was devastating”. Mike Berners-Lee of Lancaster University called COP28 “the fossil fuel industry’s dream outcome, because it looks like progress, but it isn’t”.

Martin Siegert of the University of Exeter said that not making a clear declaration to stop fossil fuel burning “is a tragedy for the planet and our future. The world is heating faster and more powerfully than the COP response to deal with it.” And from Dr Friederike Otto of Imperial College London: “With



every vague verb, every empty promise in the final text, millions more people will enter the frontline of climate change and many will die.”

The scientists and the policymakers appear to live in parallel worlds, and in a sense they do. The COPs, claiming to be informed by IPCC reports, disproportionately rely on emission-reduction scenarios generated by Integrated Assessment Models (IAMs) which incorporate energy, economy and a reticent analysis of climate impacts.

IAMs reflect more the social, technological and economic worldviews of the modellers than they do the physical realities. They have now been convincingly debunked in recent reports and analysis.

Such models produce absurd propositions about “net zero 2050” being compatible with the Paris goal of limiting warming to 1.5–2°C, which have become the bread-and-butter of COPs. In fact, this year will nudge 1.5°C (with warming of 1.46°C to end November), and next year will very likely be hotter. Former NASA climate chief James Hansen warns that “global warming of 2°C will be reached by the late 2030s” due to accelerated warming:

***“The first six months of the current El Nino are 0.39°C warmer than the same six months of the 2015-16 El Nino, a global warming rate of 0.49°C/decade, consistent with expectation of a large acceleration of global warming. We expect the 12-month mean temperature by May 2024 to eliminate any doubt about global warming acceleration. Subsequent decline of the 12-month temperature below 1.5°C will likely be limited, confirming that the 1.5°C limit has already been passed.”***

This should have been the core concern of the COP28 outcome, but it was never mentioned. Neither did increasingly dire warnings that big tipping points are already in play. Faster than forecast, climate impacts are triggering a cascade of tipping points in the Earth system.

And a blind eye was turned to warnings from Stockholm University’s David Armstrong McKay and his colleagues that even global warming of 1°C risks triggering some tipping points.

Privately, eminent scientists worry that we are heading towards a truly existential 4°C when the now-emerging high-end risks are accounted for.

“Could anthropogenic climate change result in worldwide societal collapse or even eventual human extinction? At present, this is a dangerously underexplored topic ... yet there are ample reasons to suspect that climate change could result in a global catastrophe,” wrote the eminent Australian climate scientist Will Steffen and colleagues in August 2022.

Nothing at this COP has substantially moved us away from that trajectory. In fact, by fostering the delusion that “orderly” solutions remain possible, as opposed to the necessity of a disruptive emergency-scale mobilisation, it has made matters worse. *By David Spratt & Ian Dunlop*



Photo: Ursula de Jong, great to see an Echidna foraging December 2023.

## **Point Nepean National Park Community update** December 2023

Point Nepean National Park is one of Victoria's most important natural, cultural, and historical places, and a popular destination for hundreds of thousands of visitors each year.

A number of projects are currently underway, to protect the site's values and enhance the ways that people can connect to this beautiful national park. Find out more about these, and other park updates below.



*Pictured above: The new camping facilities include pre-pitched tents that sit on top of low-impact timber platforms.*

### **Campground project**

After opening last year, the campground has proven popular with visitors, with its pre-pitched tents and onsite facilities offering an easy camping experience on the foreshore. The 2022-23 camping season saw over 1,000 people stay overnight in the national park.

The campground will now be expanded to include a new 'Woodland' area, with additional tent platforms carefully placed among the national park's Moonah trees, nearby in the Quarantine Station precinct.

Works are expected to start over summer, with Parks Victoria appointing ACE Landscape Services Pty Ltd to construct the facilities.

The works are being delivered as part of the Point Nepean National Park Master Plan, and are being funded as part of a \$6.4 million investment from the Victorian Government.

**[Find out more about the Campground project](#)**





*Pictured above: The Boiler House, within the Disinfecting Complex, was built at the Quarantine Station in 1900. It was used to disinfect the luggage and burn contaminated clothes of passengers arriving in Victoria by boat.*

### **Story-telling and Interpretation project**

A 'story-telling' interpretation project is also underway to improve the park's visitor experience.

Point Nepean is a significant place for Traditional Owners, the Bunurong people, and an important sanctuary for the protection of a range of native plants and animals.

It has also played an important role in shaping early European settlement and the defence of Australia, being used to quarantine people arriving in Victoria, defending the colony and state, and for military training.

The project will deliver new interpretive signage across the park, and an immersive experience in the Boiler House. This will provide visitors with more opportunities to gain a deeper understanding and connection to the park's significant cultural heritage and environmental values.

The design and content of the story-telling and interpretation project is well underway, with a request for tender for the manufacture and install expected to be released in the coming months.

The works are being delivered as part of the Point Nepean National Park Master Plan, and are being funded as part of a \$6.4 million investment from the Victorian Government.

**[Find out more about the story-telling project](#)**





*Pictured above: Perched atop a cliff overlooking Port Phillip and the Southern Ocean, the forts have a long and rich history.*

### **Fort Nepean conservation works**

Nearby in the park, detailed engineering and conservation assessments are underway to help remedy structural issues at Fort Nepean.

Sitting at the very tip of Point Nepean National Park, the fortifications were built to protect Melbourne during World War I and played an important part of Victoria's defences from the 1880s to 1945. Exploring the large and unique concrete structures provides a glimpse into military tactics of the day – with the forts housing gun emplacements, barracks, tunnels, an engine house and even a bomb-proof room.

The conservation works will enable the safe reopening of several visitor areas and help to conserve this important part of Victoria's history.

Heritage consultants are completing initial investigations of the site, including geotechnical assessments, to determine the repairs required and develop a proposed plan for the works.

These works are being funded by \$6 million from the Victorian Government's Heritage Icons program.

**[Find out more about the Fort works](#)**



*Pictured above: Completed upgrades at the Harold Holt Memorial.*

### **Harold Holt Memorial upgrades**

Visitors can once again take in the stunning views at the Harold Holt Memorial Lookout, with works to build new decking, railing, retaining walls and seating complete.



*Pictured above: An echidna searching for a breakfast of ants and termites (left, image credit Alex Fensome). Echidna diggings at Point Nepean campground (right).*

### **Echidnas of Point Nepean Park**

Point Nepean has a resident population of echidnas that were regular visitors to the campground last summer and autumn. Echidnas poke their long snout into ant mounds and logs and have a very long sticky tongue to help them catch ants and termites. They do not have any teeth. Baby echidnas spend the first seven weeks of life in their mothers pouch before being left in a burrow once their spines start growing.

### **Fun facts**

- Echidnas, along with the platypus, are the worlds oldest mammals – it is believed they evolved over 20 million years ago!
- Echidnas belong to the group called monotremes, which are egg laying mammals. They lay an egg directly into their pouch!
- Baby echidnas are called puggles.
- Echidnas can live up to 50 years old.



### **Has an echidna been here?**

There are a lot of signs that an echidna may have been in the area. You may see footprints, scats or diggings where they have been searching for ants. Echidna scats are about 7cm long and cylindrical. You may see the exoskeleton of insects in them.

Parks Victoria, Level 10, 535 Bourke St,  
Melbourne VIC 3000 Australia,  
Phone 13 1963

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## **January 2024 Summer ramble**

**Point Nepean National Park – you are invited to bring your family and friends!**

Sunday 21 January 2024 – early start at 8.30 am!

Walk from Quarantine Station along bay beach to Observation Point 2.8 kms and return via Coles Track (similar distance).

There is the option of 1km extension to the walk, to the cemetery from Observation Point!

PS Toilets at Quarantine centre and Gunners Cottage

Park at Quarantine Station and we will offer a return ride from Gunners Cottage.

Should be best time of year for this walk!!

Reminder and any further details will be emailed a week before!

**The NCG congratulates the Friends of Moonah Warren on receiving the 2023 Magical Moonah Award from the MPS.**

Rhonda Day on behalf of the Convenors, Inez Dussuyer and Dennis Toth, reports:

At our Working Bee this Saturday, Angela Dunn, who has provided such wonderful support to us for the last few years, brought along the award given to us by the Mornington Peninsula Shire - **the Magical Moonah Award**. This stated: "Since 2019, this newly formed group has achieved an enormous amount in such a short period of time. .... On behalf of the Mornington Peninsula Shire we thank you for your ongoing work and commitment to protecting and enhancing the biodiversity value of Moonah Warren Bushland Reserve".

Congratulations and thanks to all our supporters but particularly the core group of people who have made this award possible by their hard work each month. After years of wrestling with polygala and other invasive weeds, we are happy and proud to see the native vegetation emerge, including helmeted orchids which were previously hidden, and to see the Reserve enjoyed by the community. Enormous thanks to Angela who has taught us how to recognise and preserve our native plants.

Remember, even if you can't do the physical work, you are very welcome to come along before the Working Bee ends and join us for morning tea. Your support is valued. Best wishes for the festive season and the summer holidays and we hope to see even more of you at Working Bees on the fourth Saturday morning in 2024.



Photo: magical moonahs courtesy People and Parks Foundation 'Live Nature Wise' program

On behalf of the NCG committee I wish you a wonderful summer on the Nepean Peninsula shared with family and friends. May the spirit of this season live on in 2024.  
Warmest regards, Ursula de Jong, President NCG Inc.



