



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 July Newsheet 2024



In mid-July high tide, king tide and storm surges coincided producing huge thundering waves and spectacular splashes along the Bass Strait coast. Walking along the cliffs was truly exhilarating. Photo U de Jong.

Welcome to your second Winter NCG Inc Newsheet!

We welcome your feedback and engagement.

Your 2024 committee members are:

Ursula de Jong (President), John Atchison (Vice President), Catherine Walker (Treasurer), Eddy de Jong (Secretary); General committee members: Jane Byrne, Chris Dunn, Lisa Howard, Shannon Richards, John Trewarne

Contacting us: info@nepeanconservationgroup.org.au

President: president@nepeanconservationgroup.org.au

The NCG committee met on 20 July 2024 for their bi-monthly committee meeting.

We provide a summary of some of the matters presented and discussed:

- Newsheet June 2024 emailed to all members – received positive feedback from 5 members – very heart warming to receive feedback
- Nepean Advocacy Group (NAG) Short reports have been compiled by NAG, further discussion and follow up required. NEXT NAG MEETING has been rescheduled from June to July and now to August 2024.
- We received an email to say that Mike MacIntosh has resigned from the MPS effective end of August 2024. A great loss to the MPS. NCG sent an email thanking him for his work and wishing him well.
- Moonah Woodland Project – an opportunity to highlight the work of the NCG. Jane Byrne has been doing great work with the students from St Joseph’s Primary School.
- Point Nepean National Park: Ursula de Jong and Gidja Walker have provided a detailed response to the interpretation strategy put forward by PV, especially for Coles Track and Quarantine Station.
- Grants – the Landcare/ Melbourne Water grant has been signed off by PV, Naturelinks and NCG. Completion date is November 2024. NCG submitted the interim report 31 May 24.
- M Cheers submitted the final report for Coast Care Rye project, auspiced by NCG. Well done.
- NCG submitted the 2023-24 PPBF final report 30 June 24
- In April the NCG submitted PPBF grant application for 2024-25 – Portsea to Rye – we were notified of success at end of June and President and Treasurer have signed all the paperwork, received 15 July 24
- NCG submitted Landcare/Melbourne Water 2024-25 grant application for Tucky Track and Stringer Reserve – should have a response prior to September Committee meeting
- MPS open space strategy - NCG invited to participate in community assembly – S Richards will represent the NCG at the Initial briefing: Wednesday, 24 July, 6pm-8pm, Online via Zoom; In-person deliberations: Saturday, 27 July, 8.30am for 9am start -1:30pm, In-person at Mornington Library and to Finalise recommendations: Thursday, 8 August, 6pm-8pm, Online via Zoom
- MPS Urban Forest Strategy – NCG submission sent via email (10 July 2024)
- MPS and bushfire strategy and letter and submissions to State Government; working with the community – meeting held 16 May; homework to read all documentation by MPS and review and respond. ONGOING. We have had a request from a group in Hastings to join us. Links for follow up:

<https://www.mornpen.vic.gov.au/Building-Planning/Strategic-Planning/Strategic-Planning-Projects/Improving-Bushfire-Planning-Provisions>

https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0029/639506/Technical-Guide-Planning-Permit-Applications-Bushfire-Management-Overlay.pdf

- Meeting organised with James Rose and Hannah Brown with NRA, NCG and BCAG on 5 August 2024, 9.30 – 1.30 pm. Agenda is to understand the work of the MPS Natural Systems Team and visit a few sites including: Melbourne Road, St J W Road linear reserve; Slips and Stringer reserves, etc as time permits.
- Notice just received re upcoming MPS Council meeting 6 August re C219morn (MPS settlement strategy and neighbourhood character). Availability of an NCG member to make a submission on the day?
- Notice just received re C286morn (Ocean Beach Road Sorrento) written submissions due by 6 September 2024 – detailed in this Newsheet.
- Email received from a student at Deakin University wishing to undertake an Environmental Management Plan as an assessment task. It has been suggested that she work on Sorrento Back Beach. The NCG committee supportive and President and Vice president will liaise with the student.

• Of note is that the NCG is gaining some traction with landscape plans required in permit conditions – however progress is extremely slow and incremental. It occurs only in those cases where we have lodged an objection. We need to work to enable change across all planning applications in the MPS.

- DGR status application has stalled as we need to get the NCG website up and fully functional again.

At our May and July meetings we received reports of the work of Friends Groups at Rye and Tyrone Foreshore, thanks to S Richards, who visited the sites and met with the friends’ groups’ coordinators at the site. Refer to summary reports and pictures in this Newsheet. The NCG is making a determined effort to visit each of the Friends Groups and provide a report to you. We encourage you to join a group and help care for our unique coastal environment.

NCG Inc Winter Ramble 2024

Sunday 11 August 2024 – exploring Slips, Fawkner and Stringer Reserves, Blairgowrie.

Meet at 9.15am for a 9.30am start.

Park your car Blairgowrie Marina Top Carpark, off Point Nepean Road, to take in the beautiful vistas of Port Phillip Bay. Refer to map below!

From there, as a group we will be crossing Point Nepean Road with the traffic lights.

An easy walk from the bay, Olive St, into Blairgowrie Ave onto Stringers Road (about half a kilometre) to Slips, Fawkner and Stringer Reserves.

We will be met by members of the friends' groups who will take us through Slips and Stringers Reserves and the linking corridors with an informed commentary on the development of these reserves by their enthusiastic "friends".

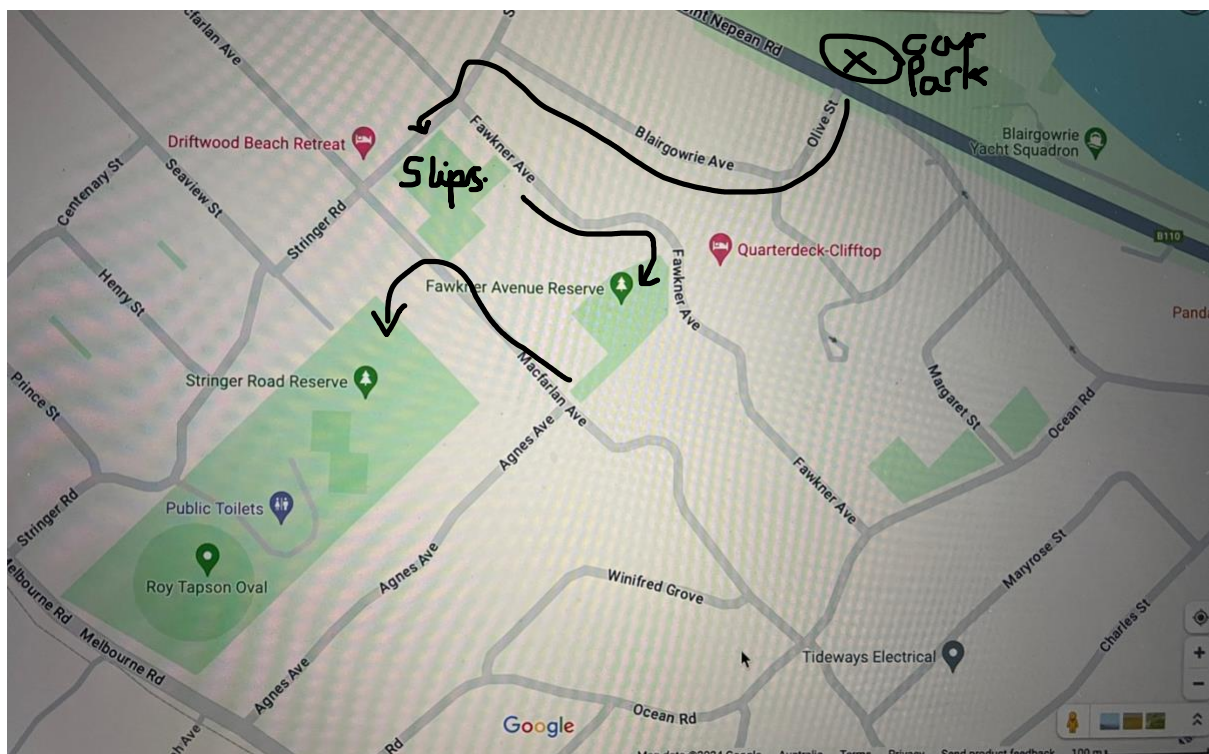
The remnant blocks are most important pockets of developing bushland, and we can also see how a number of the neighbouring properties have blended their backyards into the reserves. During the walks, there will be an opportunity to consider the impact of development, the role of open spaces on our peninsula, and the MPS's urban forest strategy, and time to discuss appropriate and inappropriate housing in this coastal area.

Wear suitable clothes for the weather on the day. Tracks are grassy and level for walking but probably damp from dew so suggest waterproof footwear. Take water with you.

Toilets are available at recreation oval. There is also a Community Hall and Community Garden to explore.

We will do the return walk to Blairgowrie Marina Top Carpark, concluding our ramble between 11.30 and 11.45am.

The NCG is promoting our bushland reserves and friend's groups and wanting to understand the work they do, with the hope of encouraging more people to get involved. Members, family and friends are welcome. We look forward to seeing many of you.



We look forward to connecting with many of you on our Winter ramble. Remember: there is no such thing as bad weather – we just need to wear the right clothes!

Re-exhibition of Amendment C286morn- Ocean Beach Road Sorrento Built Form review

Please find attached information regarding re-exhibition of Amendment C286morn- Ocean Beach Road Sorrento Built Form review. This Amendment proposes the application of permanent, mandatory built form and design controls to the Ocean Beach Road Commercial Precinct in Sorrento. The controls include updated building height, wall height and setback requirements for new development.

The NCG Inc has been campaigning for such an Amendment for several years in order to protect and enhance the valued heritage, character and amenity of the area. Community support for this amendment will prevent future inappropriate development in the Ocean Beach Road Commercial Precinct in Sorrento.

Details of information sessions to be held on 12 August and 14 August (registration required) and how to obtain more details and provide feedback is detailed below:

After the exhibition period concluded in late 2022, the Mornington Peninsula Shire Council (MPSC) undertook a review of the amendment which resulted in changes being made to the amendment. This included revised versions of the Ocean Beach Road Sorrento Built Form Review and the proposed DDO28 control, both of which were endorsed by MPSC in May 2024.

The Mornington Peninsula Planning Scheme is a legal document that controls how land can be used and developed within the Shire. 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 amendment implements key recommendations of Council's adopted Ocean Beach Road Sorrento Built Form Review (May 2024).

Amendment C286morn applies to land shown in the map below:



Where to get more information:

- Visit our website at: www.mornpen.vic.gov.au/Building-Planning/Strategic-Planning/Planning-Scheme-Amendments [and scroll down to 'Amendment C286morn – Ocean Beach Road Sorrento Built Form Review']
- Speak to a planning officer by calling (03) 5950 1003 or emailing strategic.admin@mornpen.vic.gov.au
- Attend one of our information sessions at the Sorrento Community Centre (860 - 868 Melbourne Road, Sorrento) Registration is essential. On:
 - Monday, 12 August 2024, 10am to 2pm
 - Wednesday 14 August 2024, 5:30pm to 7:30pm

To register, please contact us on the above details. Registrations close at 2:00 pm on Thursday, 8 August 2024.

Have your say: If you wish to have your say about the amendment, you must do so in writing by no later than **5pm, Friday, 6 September 2024**. Instructions on how to make a written submission are included in the attached notice.

Your privacy: If you make a submission, Council collects and uses information in your submission according to the requirements of the Privacy & Data Protection Act 2014 and Planning and Environment Act 1987. This means we will use your information to:

- consider your submission
- notify you of the opportunity to attend Council meetings and any public hearing held to consider submissions

- disclose your submission during the public panel hearing process (if one is required).

A copy of your submission, and any others received by Council, will also be made available at Council’s offices and on this webpage for any person to inspect free of charge for two months after Amendment C286morn either comes into operation or lapses.

In each of the above circumstances, we will always remove your personal information (including your name, address and contact details) from public viewing. For more information about how we protect your privacy, please refer to the [Shire’s Privacy Policy](#).

If you have any questions about Amendment C286morn, please call the MPS Strategic Planning team (03) 5950 1003 or email strategic.admin@mornpen.vic.gov.au

Please also refer to attached document for further information.



July 2024 on the Nepean Peninsula the first Swainson Pea in full bloom sighted on the cliff walk along Bass Strait – a harbinger of Spring! The Scented Groundsel with pearls of raindrops following one of our numerous downpours over the past few weeks, Mornington Peninsula National Park. Photos U de Jong

A date for your diaries:

NCG Spring Ramble
Saturday 19 October 2024 – 9.00am – 12.00 noon.

This will be combined with a working bee to plant 400 plants in the MPNP Bridgewater Bay precinct.

Watch this space for further exciting details.

Photo: walking the track July 2024
Photo U de Jong



Friends Group (FG) Tyrone Foreshore Reserve, May 2024, Shannon Richards



Fantastic view from the top of the lookout, note the excellent coverage of mid and high-level plants. All of these shrubs (bearded heath) and trees (moonahs visible on the ridge) are self-generated. Photo S Richards.

This group was formed in 2012, facilitated by Terese Dalman, supported by Whitecliffs to Camerons Bight Foreshore Reserve Committee of Management, on behalf of DECCA, which is independent of the Shire and Parks Victoria. The small wedge-shaped area managed by the FG is centred around the White Cliffs Lookout. The group has no financial support, so they bring their own equipment.

Summary: Over the 12 years old, much has been achieved. Significant weeds have been largely removed, native vegetation has taken its place relatively quickly; ongoing weed seedling removal is critical to maintain the site which exhibits significant plant biodiversity.

- FG meetings: this small active group meets on alternating 3rd Sat/Sun of the month at 10am, at the old foreshore office and amenity block, directly on the foreshore. Followed by morning tea (Sat) or a BYO BBQ (Sun) at Terese's house which is across the road on Nepean Hwy. 5-8 people regularly attend on these weekends, most members are 50-60 years old, with plenty of enthusiasm to share.
- Recent work: removing weed seedlings is ongoing because of a high "soil" seedbank, evident were lots of small polygala, cotoneaster and pea vines seedlings along the path needing removal.
- Rubbish: minimal rubbish was seen, rubbish collection by the volunteers is ongoing and needed due to the close proximity of the camping area.
- Plant coverage: The FG reserve has an excellent coverage of 2-4m high tea trees, small groups of established moonahs closer to the road and scattered sheoaks. A large percentage of medium sized shrubbery is bearded heath. Native seedlings pop up regularly once the weeds are removed, this has meant that planting seedlings has been unnecessary. Thus the area is almost fully regenerated by ongoing weed removal alone. The variety of native seedlings naturally growing includes thyme rice flower, Pomaderris, swainson pea, bush pea, boobialla, sea box, hedge wattle, pigface, common correas, coastal salt-bush, coast wattle, rare bitter-bush, and orchids. The leafy greenhood native orchid grows under the vegetation mid-layer, also seen is the pink fairy orchid in September.

- Invasive weeds: The area covered by the FG was in poor condition, heavily populated by polygala and other environmental weeds such as boxthorn, Italian buckthorn, cotoneaster, bridal creeper, and dolichos pea. The FG works progressively through the area, starting at one end then working to the other end, clearing weed regrowth then repeating. Due to the intensive attention to weed removal, most of the large weeds are removed, meaning that lighter work is now generally required for weed seedling removal.
- Fauna: birds seen here include thornbills, silvereyes, grey shrike thrushes, occasionally eastern spinebills and once a black shouldered kite.
- Erosion: Beach erosion is an ongoing issue, the old wooden groyne that was protecting the sandy beach is decaying. Approximately 2-3 years ago, the sand was topped up significantly but most of this has now also disappeared. Erosion on the beach banks is evident, less so on the cliff banks. Further increase in biomass would reduce this over time.



Tyrone Foreshore. Left: Hole evident in the groyne, increasing sand erosion. Whitecliffs Lookout can be seen in the top RHS. Right: Due to potentially rising sea levels and increasing tide surges, the reserve edge is gradually eroding. Planting of salt bush has been partially successful; some died but surviving plants take off quickly and bind the “soil”. Photos S Richards.

Friends Group (FG) Rye Foreshore, June 2024, Shannon Richards

This is a recently formed group, approximately 5 years old, facilitated by Naturelinks (via Mornington Peninsula Shire) and on the ground, by Mechelle Cheers. The area is large, from the White Cliffs Lookout towards Rye township, along the Rye camping area, to the Rye pier. This includes the Rye Lime Kiln. The area is deep, with extensive native shrubs, mostly in the range of 2-6m high, with extensive lower level weed coverage: predominantly non-native grasses approximately 2 ft high. Naturelinks organises the “heavy” weed removal such as hiring contractors to remove woody weeds (Cotoneasters and Italian Buckthorn) and scramblers. The FG focuses on lower level weed removal and replanting.

Summary: In the short span of 5 years, the FG have made a noticeable impact on restoration of the foreshore, focussing in on key areas. Starting from the White Cliffs lookout, down the hill and around the Rye Kiln, areas have been cleared of medium-large woody weeds by Naturelinks; habitat destruction has significantly reduced; pockets of new plants have been established; public adherence to the paths has improved and local awareness and respecting of the environment has improved. Given that this area is alongside the camping area and there is high foot traffic, there is still a lot to do here, and on-going maintenance is critical. Over the time, grants of around \$40 000 have been obtained for weed removal; this has given the group a real boost, and increasing motivation and work done.

- FG meetings: This group meets with Naturelinks, every 3rd week of the month, on Wednesdays at 9:30am at the Lime Kiln. Membership is around eight people, with up to five people attending each session.
- Recent work: The MPS through Naturelinks provides 200 plants per annum. The initial focus has been rehabilitation of the area around the heritage Lime Kiln. This has enabled natural regeneration, alongside pockets of seedling planting. In May 20 additional seedlings were planted alongside the beach track - mostly correas, grasses, and coastal Pomaderris. Around the kiln, four new group plantings are visible. Three years

ago the storm water drain to the beach (a health hazard) was successfully redeveloped by Melbourne Water in conjunction with the Shire. The area has been reshaped, and a large biofiltration basin built with raised broad-walks and planted with native grasses such as club-rush. Ongoing maintenance is required to ensure that this transformed area remains to a place to visit.

- **Rubbish:** Rubbish levels are high. This is hard to manage due to the high foot traffic and dog use. It would be easy to use the allocated FG time to just removing rubbish each month. This is a big problem and needs a solution.
- **Plant coverage:** During covid, significant damage was caused by people trashing the area, driving cars up the hill beside the kiln, killing of small trees and shrubs to increase ocean views by neighbours, homeless sleepouts, long-term campers increasing land usage and introducing weeds by creating small gardens and veggie patches. This has been stopped and now real progress can be seen with environmental rehabilitation. The variety of native plants is limited and is less than the neighbouring Tyrone foreshore. Currently main plants are small-medium trees such as tea tree and established Moonah's up the hill. Some clumps of bearded heath, wirilda, and boobialla are evident, with saltbush and native grasses beside the beach. While plant coverage is high, along the beach, large areas of sallow wattle have taken over which is problematic. The FG is limited in what they can do here. Hairy spinifex is still present; the FG is trying to preserve the remaining clumps and encourage spread.
- **Invasive weeds:** Close to the campground, all bushy areas are densely covered in non-native grass. There is little capacity at present to do anything about this. Naturelinks in the future may consider biodegradable sprays but some areas are "protected" by council regulations which limit options. One side benefit is that this grass makes access harder and it binds the soil! Unfortunately, these areas have become a dumping ground of small rubbish. Other weeds in small amounts were silver bush, invasive clumps of yellow flowered gazanias and bridal creeper; oxalis in large areas and sallow wattle.
- **Fauna and birds** - 2 blue cranes were seen recently.
- **Erosion:** limited due to high plant coverage and protection due to topography. Being a low-lying area, future risk due to rising sea levels may become an issue.



Rye foreshore area covered by the Friends Group is extensive, from Rye pier to the historic Lime Kiln. Photo S Richards.



Most work by the FG is close to the Rye Kiln, new plantings of salt bush can be seen. Seedling survival rate is good. Photo S Richards



The area is quite pretty and deserves more attention to vegetation management. Close to the kiln, weed mass is low due to the excellent work of the FG with Naturelinks. Move 50m away and there are large areas overtaken by weeds and shrubs such as sallow wattle. This area could become a showcase if sufficient resources were invested, as the foundation work by the Friends Group and the topography is excellent. Photo S Richards.