



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

Nepean Conservation Group's Mission is

To lead and inspire the community to appreciate, recognise, conserve, protect and celebrate the environment 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 December 2025 Newsheet



Box in flower, Mornington Peninsula National Park. Photographed after a rain, 21 December 2025. Ursula de Jong

Welcome to your NCG December 2025 Newsheet. We do welcome your feedback and engagement. Please note the invitation to our 2026 AGM on 14 February [p.2]; and that NCG subscriptions for 2026 are now due [1 January 2026] [p.2]. We thank you for your ongoing support. Committee nominations are due Friday 16 January.

Your 2025 committee members are: Ursula de Jong (President), Catherine Walker (Treasurer), Eddy de Jong (Secretary); General committee members: John Atchison, Jane Byrne, Chris Dunn, Lisa Howard, John Trewarne, Olivia [Ollie] Cable. Contacting us: info@nepeanconservationgroup.org.au
President: president@nepeanconservationgroup.org.au

You are invited to the NCG AGM to be held on Saturday 14 February 2026

As many of you are aware, we are unable to use Badcoe Hall in Point Nepean National Park, where we have held our AGMs for the past 10 years. The NHS has generously agreed to host us in 2026.

All members of NCG Inc are advised that an annual general meeting of the members of Nepean Conservation Group will take place as follows:

Time: 3.30pm [suggest arrival time at 3.00pm]
Date: Saturday 14 February 2026
Place: Nepean Historical Society and Museum, 827 Melbourne Rd, Sorrento VIC 3943

On arrival at the meeting, members should check the register of members and if needed, update their name, address and any other details. All attendees in person must register at reception desk.

All are invited to a BYO everything picnic dinner in the adjacent gardens, Pioneer Memorial Garden, corner Melbourne Rd and Ocean Beach Road, Sorrento. Leave by 8.30 pm.

Formal papers will be sent on 23 January 2026, 21 days before the AGM on Saturday 14 February 2026. Please ensure that your subscription is up to date – annual membership falls due on 1 January each year.

We look forward to seeing many of you at the AGM and catching up with you during dinner afterwards.

The 2026 committee will be elected at the AGM. We hereby invite nominations for the 2026 committee. Please send expressions of interest to the NCG secretary, Dr Eddy de Jong, info@nepeanconservationgroup.org.au by Friday 16 January 2026.

NOTICE OF NCG MEMBER SUBSCRIPTIONS DUE 1 JANUARY EACH YEAR.

Please take this notice as a reminder that YOUR membership subscription is NOW due. Please find attached a form for renewals and for new membership applications. Please complete with your details – name, mobile and email. We still have a number of people who have paid and failed to give us these details – which means we cannot contact you!

I apologise that you are not receiving an individual letter and invoice. I have not been able to undertake that. We have 250 individual and family members on our books. I thank each and every one of you for your support of the NCG Inc. Without your support via subscriptions, and your generous donations, the NCG could not continue to undertake the work it does in advocating for our unique coastal environment on the Nepean Peninsula. The bimonthly Newsheets, and our AGM are the main ways we communicate with you. From 2026 onwards we hope to be able to report that our new, simplified website will also provide a communications platform for our members and will be able to be used to advertise the work we do, and thus enable our membership to grow.

I thank the whole committee for their work on membership, and especially Chris Dunn our membership officer, and Eddy de Jong our organisation secretary, for reorganising our database, keeping it up to date, and ensuring your privacy. Membership: membership@nepeanconservationgroup.org.au

**THANK YOU TO ALL WHO CAME TO OUR PLANTING WORKING BEE on Saturday 6 September 2025
9.00-11.30 am, at Bridgewater Bay Mornington Peninsula National Park**

The environmental changes here are significant, though more ongoing work is always needed! The NCG was successful in getting a MPS Placemaking Grant [\$15k] – part of the money will be used to sustain the work in this precinct, to support the friends and further working bees.

Fourteen of you came along to do planting, weeding and follow-up environmental work, as part of the 2024-2025 Port Phillip Bay Fund Grant. We are very grateful to the Victorian State Government for the funds to deliver this project, “Stewardship of the Bay: conserving the coastal environment - Portsea to Rye” which allowed us to undertake work across a number of our bushland reserves: Police Point Shire Park, Sorrento Foreshore, Moonah Waren and Bridgewater Bay.

Over the months of October, November and into December the self-seeded Seneca [the scented groundsel] has been in full bloom – such a beautiful sight to behold.



Photos December 2025, Ursula de Jong

“Stewardship of the Bay: conserving the coastal environment - Portsea to Rye” PPBF Grant 2024-2025 provided by the Victorian state Government. Final report submitted on 30 November 2025

The Nepean Conservation Group worked with the Mornington Peninsula Shire, Parks Victoria, volunteers and contractors to conduct on-ground coastal bushland management works to remove woody weeds and scramblers and hand-weed ground flora weed plots, improving the overall extent and condition of the Bay’s natural ecosystems through targeted habitat restoration. This project was located in the interface between the marine and terrestrial zones from Portsea to Rye, along the Port Phillip Bay Foreshore, and in the Mornington Peninsula National Park. It encompassed sand, dunes and bushland reserves. Building on previous work, together we created more resilient biodiverse habitats and biolinks. The project invited active participation in working bees run by people with expertise, with hands-on learning on the ground, weeding techniques, habitat-care and some tube planting, leading to greater understanding and appreciation of the local coastal Bay ecosystem. Follow up work is necessary for a sustainable outcome. Across our four sites this grant has enabled us to achieve a noticeable reduction in environmental weeds, improved biolinks, improved biodiverse ecosystems and habitats for flora and fauna, and an enthusiastic response to planting and weeding "events" by volunteers.

Our project has meaningfully contributed to "Protecting Victoria’s Environment – Biodiversity 2037", Victoria’s plan to stop the decline of our native plants and animals and improve our natural environment, by working towards its two overarching goals: Victorians value nature, and Victoria’s natural environment is healthy. The NCG with local people have worked with PV and the MPS because we value our coastal environment and take seriously our commitment to stewardship of our place, by caring for our environment to ensure that it is healthy and resilient in a world now impacted by climate change and global warming. The NCG’s work through this grant directly addresses "A healthy environment for healthy Victorians" on the southern tip of the Mornington Peninsula, by 3. Raising the awareness about the importance of the state’s natural environment, through our Newsheets, Friends Groups and working bees. 4. Increasing opportunities to have daily connections with nature, through our seasonal rambles and working bees. 5. Increasing opportunities to act to protect biodiversity through hands on working bees, field

workshops and rambles. 14. Engaging with Traditional Owners to include Aboriginal values and traditional ecological knowledge in biodiversity planning and management, through cultural walks and workshops.

We organised a Spring coastal guided walk for up to 30 of our volunteers and Friends Groups members with Living Culture on the Mornington Peninsula who "educate, empower and engage" our community. Living Culture's "mission is to educate people about the importance of keeping Aboriginal culture alive. Indigenous knowledge is a living link to the past, present and future." The walk and meditation were scheduled on Sunday 16 November 2025, cancelled due to heavy rain; rescheduled for Saturday 29 November 2025, and cancelled again due to the forecast of heavy rain. We will reschedule in 2026 – once organised you will be invited. We sincerely hope third time lucky.

Interpretative Sign update and installation completed

After three years work, the NCG has received an email from the MPS to say that both signs have now been approved by Friends of Sullivans Bay and Western Sister. The signs are being installed in a patch that they have worked actively to restore. The wording will be updated on the sign above to read the following:

Sandy, lime-rich soils, and a dynamic coastal climate produce this vegetation, characterised by a canopy of Moonah and Coast Teatree with a diverse mix of shrubs and groundcovers. The Friends of Sullivan Bay and Western Sister work together with the Shire to protect this threatened vegetation community.

The original work was undertaken by the NCG Inc with a PPBF grant 2022-2023, supported by the Victorian State Government. We are very pleased to report this progress.

On 15 December we were informed they are now in situ. Clayton advised "I think they look fantastic and really complement the bushland along the trail, while also highlighting all the great work that volunteers have undertaken at the site over the years".



You are invited to take a stroll and enjoy the place and these interpretative signs.

Sorrento Back Beach Coast Care grant updates:

On 1 October 2025 NatureLinks Crew started on the Coastcare grant at Coppins track beginning on the eastern end. They have already cleared some decent areas of polygala for the Autumn planting. Next on the list is the boxthorn and dolichos between the (missing!) SLSC and the Coppins rotunda lookout. Take a walk and see the progress!

Sorrento back beach rock pool closed – tiger snake in pool

On Thursday 18 December, Sorrento Surf Life savers closed the rock pool at Sorrento back beach. Swimmers found themselves swimming with a large tiger snake, alerted the SSLS who closed the popular beach rock pool. The tiger snake then made itself at home in the rocks above the pool.

NOTE – tiger snakes are great swimmers and can stay under for up to 20 minutes.

WARNING – snakes are very active in summer!



Sorrento Surf Life Saving Club under construction:



Photo taken from Coppins Lookout, December 2025, Ursula de Jong



The construction is scheduled to be completed in February 2027. Photo taken December 2025, Ursula de Jong

GREEN PATROL SATURDAY 24 JANUARY 2026 – you are invited to participate! More info closer to the day.

Location: Sorrento Back Beach

Purpose & Objectives

To deliver a community-focused environmental day that connects people, waterways, and patrols through education, action, and shared responsibility for the coastal environment.

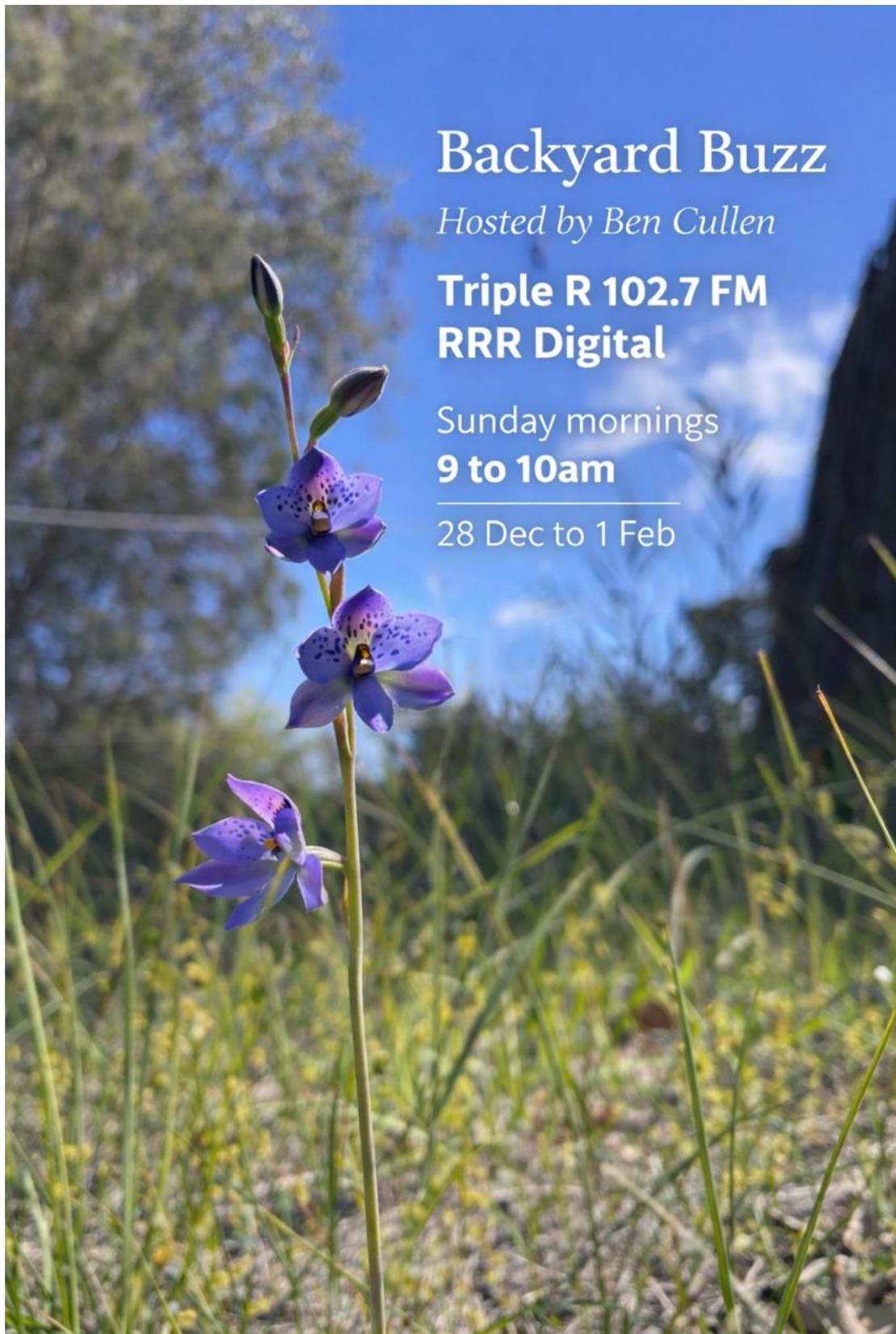
- Promote sustainable practices
- Educate community members and club members
- Start conversations and build lasting connections
- Connect waterways, patrols, and environmental stewardship
- Strengthen the environment as a core pillar and value of the club

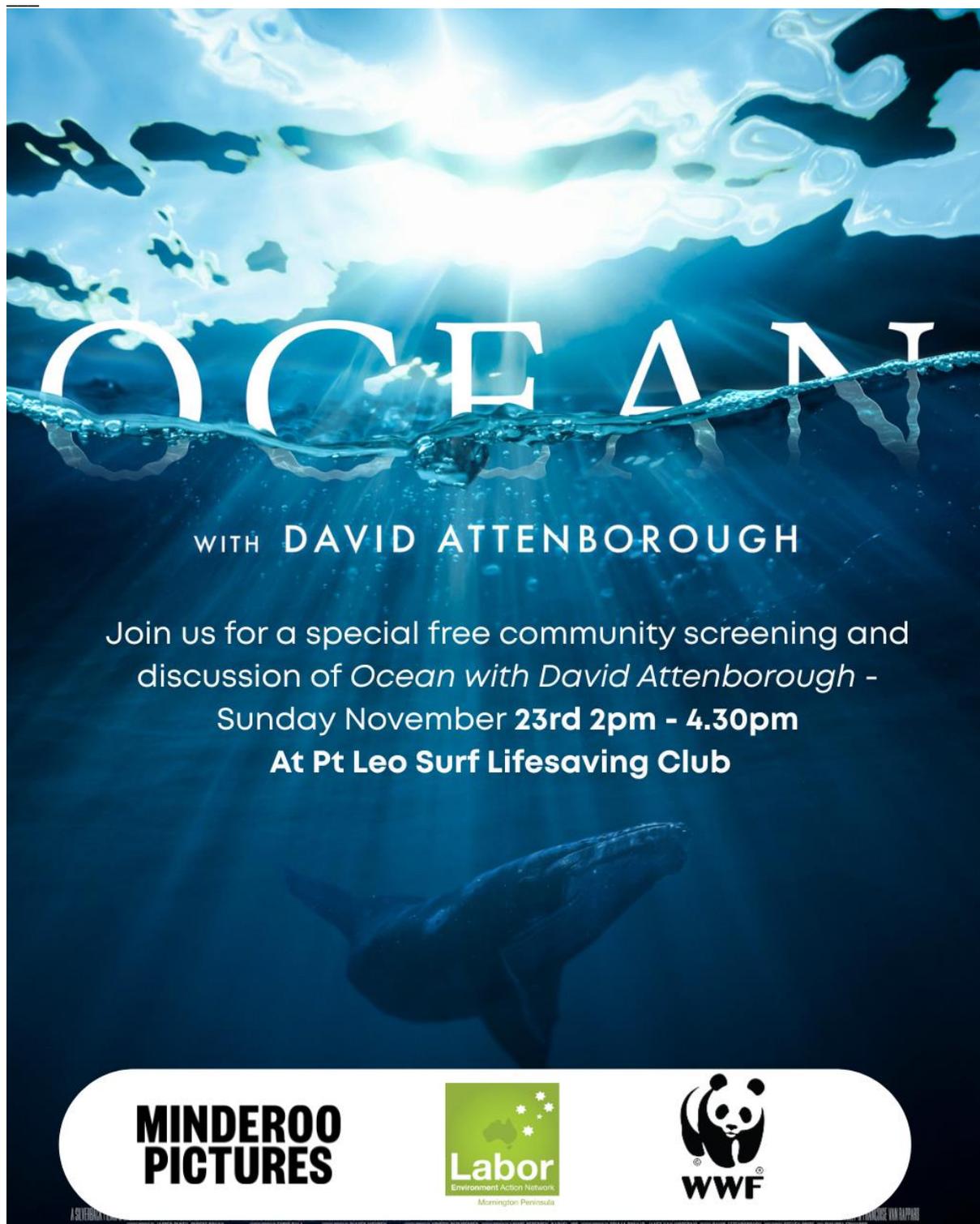


Green patrol planning team, 18 December 2025 at Sorrento back beach – Liz, Andrew, Oliver, Harry, Erin, Tex, Ursula and Eddy. Below – two maggies emphasise that we should be taking our rubbish home!



INVITATION TO LISTEN: Ben Cullen from Trust for Nature is hosting a RRR radio show about nature around greater Melbourne for the next 6 weeks on Sunday mornings. Gidja is on next week [3 January 2026], this week it's flying foxes with Deborah Ladd and frogs with David de Angelis. Hope you all can tune in and support this terrific program.





Eddy and Ursula de Jong attended together with about 50 people – stunning film, thought provoking, beautiful and heart wrenching. A must see if possible. The discussion that followed was excellent – chaired by Sarah Race, speakers Mel Barker [CEO of the Biosphere Foundation] and Kate Noble [Environmental and human rights policy specialist – WWF-Australia].

Hooded Plovers updates 2025/2026

Summary: on the Nepean Peninsula - 36 known nests; 80 minimum eggs laid; 17 failed at nest stage; 2 current chicks; 6 known failed chicks; 2 fledglings.

Photo credits Teresa Madgwick and Friends of Hooded Plovers



Gunnamatta fledglings



Gunnamatta birds bickering, 25 November 25 Photo credit Teresa Madgwick



Gunnamatta fledgling dodging an attack - 25 November 2025. Photo credit Teresa Madgwick



Gunnamatta fledgling feeding - 25 November 2025. Photo credit Teresa Madgwick

[View this email in your browser](#)



Newsletter December 2025

The **Summer Edition of the Friends Group Newsletter** is attached! 🌻

Please find it attached, and don't forget to share it with your group members (I only send this to Friends Group Coordinators – that's you!).

Does your group apply for grants? The **Victorian Coastcare Grants** are now open! You can find all the details on the [Coastcare Victoria Community Grants](#) website.

Thank you for another incredible year of caring for the peninsulas biodiversity. Wishing you all a safe, relaxing, and happy holiday season. I'll be back on board Monday 5 January, ready for an exciting year ahead! 🐦

With thanks and best wishes,

Hannah



HANNAH BROWN (she/her) | Natural Systems Volunteers Officer

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Follow us on social media!



Mornington Peninsula Shire acknowledges and pays respect to the Bunurong people, the Traditional Custodians of these lands and waters.



Visitors to Sumner Street in Blairgowrie! White faced blue heron [normally seen on the rock shelves] and an echidna [normally in the bushland reserves]. These welcome visitors alert us all that we need to be especially careful on our roads. Slow down and be observant. Advise your neighbours and any visitors to the Nepean Peninsula. Below echidna tracks on the dunes, MPNP. Photos November and December 2025, Ursula de Jong.



Some images of summer on the Nepean Peninsula, in MPNP and in our Shire bushland reserves.



Are you able to identify them all? Have you seen them on your walks in the National Parks or in our Shire Bushland reserves? Or perhaps you have these in your backyards too. Photos December 2025, Ursula de Jong



Blue bottles have invaded our beaches – ocean and bay. Bridgewater Bay, MPNP, December 2025, photo Ursula de Jong.

Source: <https://australian.museum/learn/animals/jellyfish/bluebottle/>

The whole article is worth a read!

Scientific name: *Physalia physalis*

Alternative name/s: Indo-Pacific and Portuguese Man o'War

Similar species: By-the-wind sailor (*Velella*) and the Blue Button (*Porpita pacifica*)

The Bluebottle, *Physalia physalis*, is a common, if unwelcome, summer visitor to Victorian beaches. At the mercy of the wind, they are sometimes blown into shallow waters, and often wash up onto the beach. On the eastern coast of Australia, it is the NE winds and warmer currents that bring them and other organisms that make up the armada or fleets of blue coloured floating colonial cnidarians and their predators, to beaches on the incoming tides.

Distribution

The Bluebottle, Pacific man-o-war, is found in marine waters in the Indian and Pacific Oceans. The only other species, *Physalia physalis*, the Portuguese man-o-war is found in the Atlantic ocean.

Throughout Australia, bluebottles are more common on exposed ocean beaches after strong onshore north easterly winds wash them ashore and are rarely found in sheltered waters.

Portsea Back beach was closed on Tuesday 16 December due to the number of blue bottles being washed ashore!

WARNING: Check your surroundings before swimming. Tentacles can be up to 10m in length. They cannot sting through wetsuits or clothing. They can sting even if washed up on the beach.



Aurora Australis photographed by one of our members, Frances Regan, in Sorrento in December 2025.

Seasons' greetings to you all – enjoy a safe happy summer on the peninsula.

**As always, we do welcome your feedback and engagement.
info@nepeanconservationgroup.org.au**