



## NEPEAN CONSERVATION GROUP INC

ABN 44 531 738 131 Reg. No. A0020791U

PO Box 157, Sorrento 3943

[www.nepeanconservationgroup.org.au](http://www.nepeanconservationgroup.org.au) [info@nepeanconservationgroup.org.au](mailto: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 Autumn 2026 Newsheet**



Seabox berries, Mornington Peninsula National Park. Photographed after a rain, late March 2026. Ursula de Jong

**Welcome to your NCG Autumn 2026 Newsheet. We do welcome your feedback and engagement. Please note invitations to four events coming up end April and early May 2026.**

**Following our NCG AGM on 14 February 2026, our 2026 committee members are:** Ursula de Jong (President), Jane Byrne (Vice-president), Catherine Walker (Treasurer), Eddy de Jong (Secretary); General committee members: John Atchison, Chris Dunn, Lisa Howard, John Trewarne, Olivia [Ollie] Cable.

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

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

**Welcome** to the first NCG Newsheet following our AGM on 14 February 2026. Apologies for the delay – following our March NCG committee meeting, I succumbed to a dreadful head cold which transformed into an upper respiratory infection, leaving me with little energy!! There is much to report in this Newsheet and lots of NCG engagement opportunities.



#### **NCG 2026 AGM**

**We had a very successful 2026 NCG AGM on 14 February 2026. Fewer people attending this year, and a long list of apologies.**

**We have uploaded the president's report and our guest speaker, Mel Barker, CEO of Western Port Biosphere, powerpoint too. Mel's presentation was very well received by members and visitors alike.**

Please go to <https://nepeanconservationgroup.org.au/>

**Enjoy the read and the updates.**

**The NCG again formally thanks the Nepean Historical Society for hosting us – the venue was terrific and Clive Smith and Annette Buckland looked after us exceedingly well. All NCG members are grateful to have been able to use the Museum facilities for our AGM.**

NCG President, Ursula de Jong with Mel Barker, CEO Western Port Biosphere

A few snaps in the Nepean Historical Society Museum during the NCG 2026 AGM!



A small number enjoyed an evening repast in the Pioneer Gardens adjoining the Nepean Historical Society and Museum. We had a breezy venue with evening sun on our backs. Lots of lively conversation! A fitting end to a successful 2026 AGM.

## Valuing what we have on our doorstep!

All our work with track maintenance, calls to restore Coppins Lookout, and environmental conservation has led to a partnership with PV [to get coast care grants for Sorrento Back Beach], with the Sorrento SLSC, and Rye Beach Clean to run the second “green patrol” on 24 January 2026. One of our NCG members and a Sorrento SLSC member, Erin Doupe continues to be instrumental in organising and co ordinating everyone for this very successful event.



Email from a nipper parent SSLSC: 10 February 2026:

"I thought that I would reach out with some positive feedback. My daughter was involved with the Nippers presentation that you presented a couple of weeks ago on the beach and she told us how much she enjoyed your presentation especially. She has worked her way through our garden identifying weeds that I now need to remove and suggesting native replacements. Looks like I will be spending more time in the garden".





## NCG EVENTS FOR YOUR DIARIES

We have four events coming up late April and early May 2026. We seek your help with two stalls to make ourselves a little more visible in our local community and invite your participation in two wonderful rambles – the first with Living Culture oceanside and the second bayside.

### NCG STALLS

#### **Friday 24 April, stall outside CBA Bank Sorrento, Ocean Beach Road**

**10.00-2.00 pm [set up 9.00am, clean up 2.00pm]** – Jane Byrne, our vice president is organising this – we hope for a wonderful success as it coincides with the Sorrento Writers Festival – so there should be lots of people around on the day! Please volunteer some time with us – handing out brochures, postcards, and chatting to people about the NCG and inviting them to join the NCG.

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

#### **Saturday 2 May – Rye Festival NCG stall, 10.00-2.00pm [set up 8.00am, clean up 2.00pm]**

Catherine Walker our Treasurer is organising this one. Again a wonderful opportunity to be part of a larger community event, with lots of people around. Please volunteer some time with us - handing out brochures, postcards, and chatting to people about the NCG and inviting them to join the NCG. We will have a plant and weed identity competition and be giving away tube stock of indigenous plants to those with correct answers!

Email: [treasurer@nepeanconservationgroup.org.au](mailto:treasurer@nepeanconservationgroup.org.au)

### RAMBLES

#### **Living Culture ramble and meditation Sunday 26 April – 12.00-3.00pm,**

**16 Beach** – Ursula de Jong, our President is organising this one. We are hoping for third time lucky! Please refer to full flyer in this newssheet – meet at 11.45am sharp at 16 Beach carpark, opposite the café, on Tasman Drive, Rye, 3941.

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

#### **Point Franklin to Shelley Beach ramble Saturday 9 May 2026, 10.00-**

**12.00noon** – John Atchison, our planning officer is organising this one. More information will be sent closer to the day. We will have time to walk and talk, explore the Fort, and walk along the beach, before returning to Point Franklin.

Email [planning@nepeanconservationgroup.org.au](mailto:planning@nepeanconservationgroup.org.au)



## Living Culture ramble and meditation Sunday 26 April – 12.00-3.00pm



The Nepean Conservation Group in conjunction with Living Culture [www.livingculture.com.au](http://www.livingculture.com.au) INVITE YOU to a very special Living Culture Guided Walk followed by a Yidaki-led Meditation on Sunday, 26 April 2026 - an educational, engaging and empowering way to complete the work undertaken in the 2024-2025 PPBF grant, “Stewardship of the Bay: conserving the coastal environment - Portsea to Rye”. The NCG is most grateful to the State Government for ongoing funding via grants to undertake vital environmental conservation work.

### Event Details:

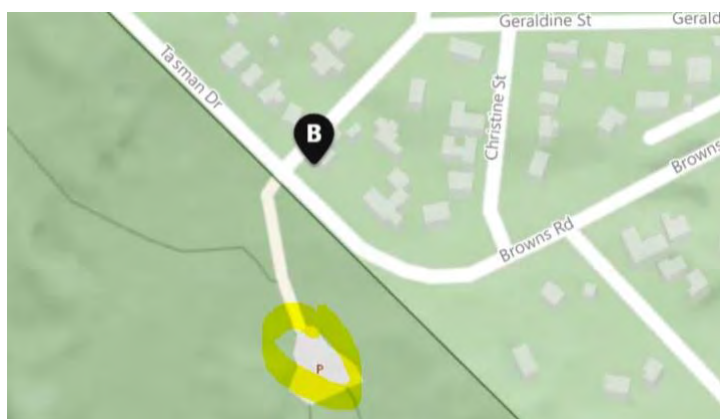
- **Location:** Number 16 Beach, Rye (Tasman Drive, Rye 3941)
- **Meeting Point:** Please meet at **Number 16 Beach Carpark** 15 minutes beforehand for the walk: **11.45am**
- **Times:** **Guided Walk with Hudson from Living Culture: 12.00noon – 2.00 pm**  
**Yidaki-led Meditation with Uncle Lionel on the didgeridoo:** commencing at 2.00 pm
- **Cost:** FREE to ALL NCG members and to Friends Group Members who have volunteered on our PPBF grant working bees 2024-2025
- **Register to confirm your spot for this special event as** places are strictly limited. Please advise your attendance to [info@nepeanconservationgroup.org.au](mailto:info@nepeanconservationgroup.org.au) by Thursday 23 April 2026

### What to Bring:

- Closed toe walking shoes
- Sunscreen, wind/rain jacket and weather-appropriate clothing
- Bottle of water
- Binoculars – maybe we will see the Peregrine falcons flying

### Additional Information:

- All children under 16 years must be accompanied by an adult
- Distance: Approximately 1.8 km return (no wheelchair access)
- There are no restrooms at Number 16 Beach
- The General Store opposite the car park at 16 Beach has coffee etc. available



MELWAY Ref: 167 10J Parking highlighted in yellow.



Fledgling Peregrine Falcon at the Div©Stav Mihelakos

**Register to confirm your spot for this special event as** places are strictly limited. Please advise your attendance to [info@nepeanconservationgroup.org.au](mailto:info@nepeanconservationgroup.org.au) by Thursday 23 April 2026, together with your contact details. Thank you.



## NCG GRANTS AND WORKING BEES

We need your help! Many hands make light work.

### COAST CARE GRANT SORRENTO BACK BEACH

Friday 1 May 2026 10.00am -12.00noon

We need your help to plant 200 plants in areas that have been cleared and prepared under this grant.

Meet 9.55am at the old ticket office, MPNP, Ocean Beach Road, Sorrento.

Please bring hats, small tools, gloves, water bottle, suitable clothes for the weather!

### MPS PLACE MAKING GRANT

Bridgewater Bay wild coast precinct.

Wednesday 22 April 2026 11.30am -12.30pm

Meet MPNP, St JohnsWood Road Carpark at 11.20am.

Planting in St JW linear bushland reserve with children from St Joseph's Primary School – indigenous plants they have propagated for our bushland reserves.

Please bring hats, small tools, gloves, water bottle, suitable clothes for the weather!

Thursday 28 May 2026 1.30 pm – 2.30 pm

Meet MPNP, St JohnsWood Road Carpark at 1.20pm.

Planting in St JW linear bushland reserve with children from St Joseph's Primary School – indigenous plants they have propagated for our bushland reserves.

Please bring hats, small tools, gloves, water bottle, suitable clothes for the weather!

Saturday 30 May 2026 9.00-11.00 am

Bridgewater Bay, MPNP

Meet MPNP, St JohnsWood Road Bridgewater Bay Carpark at 8.45am

**There will be planting, weeding, staking, and watering to do in the Bridgewater Bay area of the MPNP!**

Please bring hats, small tools, gloves, water bottle, suitable clothes for the weather!

We will send reminders to you, but

PLEASE NOTE DATES AND TIMES IN YOUR DIARIES

CONTACT EMAIL: [info@nepeanconservationgroup.org.au](mailto:info@nepeanconservationgroup.org.au)

## **NCG submission to the MPS Let's Build a Climate-Resilient Future SURVEY submitted February 2026**

**The MPS states that “As our climate continues to change, there is an opportunity for the Peninsula community to build resilience and strengthen how we prepare for the future.**

“Current and emerging challenges include storms that strain our roads and drains, heatwaves that test our emergency responses and put our vulnerable residents at risk, coastal erosion that threatens our beaches, and the ongoing risk of bushfires and changes to our energy grid.

To prepare for these challenges, we are creating a Climate Resilience Plan to help both our community and Council adapt and manage risks. The Plan will consider:

- Physical risks such as extreme weather and natural hazards
- Transition risks such as new laws, technology changes, and economic impacts
- Liability risks where Council or others may be held responsible for not acting on climate risks.

“Our framework will guide the development of the plan and your input is essential to ensure it works for everyone. We’re inviting you to share your thoughts on how we can better look after the Peninsula, now and into the future.”

### **Have Your Say**

**Q1: What would a climate-resilient Peninsula look like for you? Share 3 keywords that describe your vision.**

A resilient biodiverse environment is needed for our flora, fauna and human population. If we care for nature, nature will care for us. There is no other place like the Mornington Peninsula. A holistic approach to the Mornington Peninsula is critical - there is a need to treat the region as a single, integrated and living entity so that it can be protected for future generations. A long-term focus is required to mitigate global warming and climate change impacts. Sustainability in all we do and a proactive emissions reduction strategy are integral to ensuring a climate resilient peninsula.

**Q2: The Framework sets out what is intended to be in the Climate Resilience Plan. Do you think this is an appropriate guide, and if not why?**

No - we are aware of the explicit Councillor instructions to the Shire Officers that emissions are not to be included in the current plan. This decision was made in the complete absence of any objective assessment of community attitudes and goes against the large majority Peninsula support for the original zero emissions plan. We need to address the root cause of global warming and climate change if we are to create a climate-resilient Peninsula. The plan needs now to be twofold – future proofing the peninsula long term and addressing immediate concerns as we face storms, erosion, vegetation loss, etc.

**Q3: Is there anything else you would like to see in the Framework? YES**

1. Proactive approach to Biodiversity Protection - protecting nurturing and enhancing natural areas, habitats and ecosystems – across terrestrial and marine domains. This includes coastal areas, bushland, urban forests, green wedge, and private vegetation. The Mornington Peninsula is an integral part of the Biosphere which calls for a balance between nature and development: between people, places and ecosystems <https://www.biosphere.org.au/our-biosphere/western-port-biosphere/>
2. Pro-actively develop and implement Emissions Reduction across the entire Peninsula.
3. Risk management plan must apply community-wide, and be developed, implemented, and modified with direct input from the community.

### **The framework has 4 strategic priorities**

**Climate Adaptation** – Helping people, services, and natural systems adjust to climate impacts. Includes education, health and wellbeing, emergency preparedness, and planning for vulnerable groups. Excludes emissions reduction actions (covered under Hazard Impact Reduction).

**Hazard Impact Reduction** - Reducing the likelihood or intensity of climate hazards.

Scope: Includes actions like flood levees, firebreaks, and greenhouse gas reduction (except Council buildings). Excludes asset renewal (covered under Sustainable Infrastructure).

**Biodiversity Protection** - Protecting natural areas and ecosystems.

Includes coastal bushland, urban trees, green wedge, and private vegetation. Excludes built infrastructure.

**Sustainable Infrastructure - Making Council assets suitable for future climate conditions.**

Includes designing and upgrading roads, buildings, and open spaces to cope with future climate impacts.

Excludes hazard prevention measures (covered under Hazard Impact Reduction).

**Q4: Do you think that there is enough being done to reduce our risk in each of these areas? Please rate each topic in the matrix from 1 to 5 based on whether you think enough is being done to reduce our risk.**

**Climate Adaptation** – not at all. This strategy implies that we are “adapting” after the fact, to what has already happened. We need to be proactive in ensuring that we are lowering the impact of climate change by, for example, significantly lowering emissions. We also need to adapt to changes already apparent from global warming and climate change – for example using scientific based data, knowledge, and experience to plant appropriate flora that will not just survive but thrive into the future. The actions listed will help but only if we have a holistic approach to the issues facing us.

**Hazard Impact Reduction** - not at all. We need to do much more – be ambitious, lead the way. We need to be proactive in ensuring that we are lowering the impact of climate change by, for example, significantly lowering emissions. Building levees and firebreaks are already proving incapable of handling severe emergencies in other parts of the Victoria. We cannot rely on these approaches. We need to for example plant vegetation to hold the soils in place; we need to stop removing every bit of vegetation on roadsides, on verges, on every residential block for new builds or renovations – this is ensuring instability, the possibility of landslides, dust storms and shifting sands. We need to work with nature and not against it.

**Biodiversity Protection** – not at all. We have a number of sound policies in the MPS. We need to implement them. We need to fund them and provide appropriate levels of resources.

For example the MPS Urban Forest Strategy states as its objective:

“to protect, manage and enhance our urban green spaces and the invaluable biodiversity on the Peninsula, in the context of rising challenges from climate change, population growth and biodiversity loss” (p.4). Planning approvals for housing (new and renovations) works against the ambitious targets set in the urban Forest strategy – we are removing more trees and vegetation than we can possibly hope to plant and allow to grow in the timeframes. The goal of protecting natural areas and ecosystems must be understood holistically – the MPS policies, and strategies must work together and complement each other.

**Sustainable Infrastructure** - not at all

**Sustainable Infrastructure Making Council assets suitable for future climate conditions.**

This is an extremely narrow focus – sustainability should be the focus of all we do on the Mornington Peninsula. Sustainability is the practice of managing resources to meet present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs, ensuring long-term ecological, social, and economic balance [ref In 1987, the [United Nations Brundtland Commission](#) defined sustainability as “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”] Relevant to building a **Climate-Resilient Future are the four pillars of sustainability: Environmental responsibility, social equity, economic viability and futurity** [the ethical, long-term perspective that integrates the consequences of current environmental, economic, and social actions on future generations].

**The buildings and construction sector** is by far the largest emitter of greenhouse gases, accounting for a staggering 37% of global emissions. The production and use of materials such as cement, steel, and aluminium have a significant carbon footprint [2023 statistics, refer to <https://www.unep.org/resources/report/building-materials-and-climate-constructing-new-future>]. Only “making Council assets suitable for future climate conditions” is extremely short sighted and narrow in focus. All building, construction and infrastructure on the

Mornington Peninsula should be “sustainable” [refer to definition above]. Every new build or renovation should comply with sustainability standards which will contribute to a climate resilient future on the Peninsula.

This means all residential applications should be reviewed through planning and building permits. This points again to all MPS policies and strategies talking to each other!

**Q4: What influenced your ratings, and is there anything specific you would like to comment on?**

The NCG has been caring for the environment on the Mornington Peninsula for 53 years. Mornington Peninsula Shire Council (MPSC) in Victoria, Australia, voted to remove its Climate Emergency Declaration and Climate Emergency Plan (CEP) on April 22, 2025. The decision was made in a narrow 6-5 vote, reversing a 2019 unanimous decision to declare a climate emergency. This was extremely disappointing, short sighted and completely against the scientific evidence. It was also contrary to the wishes of the community on the Mornington Peninsula.

The Nepean Conservation Group’s vision is for people to understand and appreciate the environment that contributes to the sense of place of the Nepean Peninsula, in order to protect and conserve the amenity and enhance the character of the Nepean Peninsula. The principal purpose of the NCG is the protection, conservation and enhancement of the environment of the Nepean Peninsula, on the Mornington Peninsula, Victoria, through, but not limited to,

- conserving and promoting significant natural areas
- mitigating vegetation loss
- creating resilient habitat corridors and biolinks for wildlife
- highlighting issues affecting the environment
- promoting ecologically sustainable development principles

The wellbeing of the community on the Mornington Peninsula is integrated with the wellbeing of our environment. If we care for nature, nature will care for us.

We support the MP Shire Climate Resilience Plan Comments by Peninsula Climate Alliance (12 February 2026), of which the Nepean Conservation Group Inc is a member.

**Q5: Are there any other comments you have to help us inform the Climate Resilience Plan? This could include ideas, actions, areas of expertise, data sources or community groups.**

The Nepean Conservation Group Inc is available to discuss further the comments and information provided above. We support the MP Shire Climate Resilience Plan Comments by Peninsula Climate Alliance (12 February 2026), of which the Nepean Conservation Group Inc is a member.

Thank you for the opportunity to review and respond **to the MPS Let's Build a Climate-Resilient Future survey**. Please contact the NCG if you have further questions or seek clarifications. We would be happy to discuss.



Beautiful Coastal Banksias in Autumn 2026, Blairgowrie. Photos Ursula de Jong

## ENVIRONMENT CIRCLE 20 26

DATE	Thursday 16 April
TIME	5.00 – 6.30 pm
VENUE	Sorrento Portsea RSL



### Topic: Birds of the Mornington Peninsula

Speaker: Tania Ireton, President BirdLife Bayside since 1996

Tania has been passionately interested in birds for over half a century and used her day job in computing to fund her birding trips. These trips have taken her to New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Sumatra, Hong Kong, South Korea, New Caledonia and Sri Lanka, although her primary interest has always been Australia and its territories.

She has been president of BirdLife Bayside (a branch of BirdLife Australia) since it started in 1996, and has led many of their outings, as well as giving talks to a range of conservation and natural history groups.

She has a Graduate Certificate in Ornithology from Charles Sturt University. She has been involved in a range of bird surveys since 1990, including the Western Port Waterbird Survey, shorebird surveys at the Western Treatment Plant in Werribee and at the Saemangeum Estuary in South Korea, as well as monthly surveys at Heatherton Road South and Heatherton Road North wetlands, Yalukit Willam Nature Reserve (formerly Elsternwick Golf Course) and Bay Road Heathland Sanctuary.

COST: \$5.00 donation

Join us at 6.30 for a meal in the RSL Thai Restaurant

Environment Circle meets third Thursday February to  
November 2026

#NEPEAN BY-ELECTION



## sought view from Candidates for the up-coming 2026 Nepean By-election



The PCA has formulated a set of questions for the Candidates to respond to, regarding their platforms for the up-coming 2026 Nepean By-election. **Election date: 2nd May 2026**

The questions cover issues of considerable importance for our remarkable natural environment and the negative impacts of climate change. CANDIDATE REPLIES CAN BE SEE ON OUR WEBSITE:

<https://www.peninsulaclimatealliance.org/nepean-bi-election-candidates>

At the deadline on 10 April, three Nepean By-election candidates had sent in responses to the PCA survey: Anthony Marsh (Liberal), Sianan Healy (Greens), and Tracee Hutchison (Independent). Two candidates did not respond: Darren Hercus (One Nation) and Peter Angelico (Libertarian).

Three other candidates that have just been announced are now being circulated: Reade Smith (Sustainability Australia), Milton Wilde (End mass immigration - Reform Australia), and Renee Thompson (Legalise Marihuana).

Both Healy and Hutchison note their prior association with of PCA. It is emphasised that all candidates received the same information, and no special privileges or information were provided to any candidate. PCA will not be producing a scorecard, or voting card, but leave it up to you to read the unedited responses and decide how you wish to use the information. Any further responses will be added as received.



Sorrento Surf Life Saving Club building continues apace, late March 2026. Photo: Ursula de Jong



Sunset splash, Bass Strait, Mornington Peninsula National Park, March 2026. Photo: Ursula de Jong

# Newsletter March 2026

<https://mailchi.mp/3efdc3b4ee57/mpln-december-newsletter-5854415?e=5b86ebbf8>



As always, we do welcome your feedback and engagement.

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



Sunrise captured at Blairgowrie Foreshore, Arthur's Seat in the distance, 11 March 2026; sunrise at Sorrento back beach, below March 2026, a "Monet" composition! Photos Ursula de Jong

