



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 Spring 2026 Newsheet



Blairgowrie Beach, Bayside, Mornington Peninsula, September 2026. Photo: Ursula de Jong

Welcome to your NCG Spring 2026 Newsheet. We do welcome your feedback and engagement.

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.

Contacting us: info@nepeanconservationgroup.org.au

President: president@nepeanconservationgroup.org.au

Welcome to our Spring 2026 NCG Newssheet. There is much to report in this Newssheet and a number of NCG engagement opportunities for you. We have had a busy few months and now take the opportunity to report back to you, and to thank our many volunteers who have given of their time and energy for our Nepean Peninsula environment.



NCG DGR STATUS UPDATE

Our Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR)* Status.

Nepean Conservation Group Inc. (ABN: 44 531 738 13) is now registered with the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) as a Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR).

This means all eligible donations to Nepean Conservation Group Inc. are fully tax deductible.

***What does DGR stand for in Australia?**

DGR stands for Deductible Gift Recipient. It is a classification given by the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) to organisations that meet specific legal criteria under the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997. When you donate to a DGR-endorsed charity, the amount you give can be deducted from your taxable income in the financial year the donation is made.

Not every organisation that calls itself a charity has DGR status. Registration with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) is separate from DGR endorsement. A charity can be registered with the ACNC — and do important work — without being a DGR. Donors who want their contribution to be tax deductible need to confirm DGR status specifically.

The Nepean Conservation Group Inc. holds both ACNC registration and DGR endorsement from the ATO, so your eligible donation is fully tax deductible under Australian law.

Thank you to all those on the NCG Committee who have worked over the past five years to achieve this success.

Dr Eddy de Jong, NCG Inc secretary

Coppins Lookout Sorrento Backbeach MPNP updates



We are very pleased to be able to report that works to restore Coppins Lookout are completed [8 October 2026]. Mr Beck funded the materials, like-for-like, and McColl Smith [the construction company undertaking the SSLSC build] have undertaken the work pro bono. Work commenced the week of 7 September 2026. This is the result of many years of advocacy and a great deal of work by Rotary and NCG in conjunction with Parks Victoria. We also thank the NHS for copies of the original plans. The following photos taken by John Atchison in early October 2026 give you an idea of the considerable work that has been undertaken to reroof and stabilise this iconic structure.



You are invited:

Mornington Peninsula Seniors Festival



Mornington
Peninsula Shire

**Positive
Ageing**

Join our Seniors Festival event:

**Connect.
Create.
Celebrate.**
**1-31 Oct
2026**

Come and join in on
the fun! All events
are free or low cost.
Discover more at:
[mornpen.vic.gov.au/
seniorsfestival](http://mornpen.vic.gov.au/seniorsfestival)



Event:

A ramble from St Paul's to the Sphinx with the
Nepean Conservation Group

Date and time:

31st Oct. 9:30 am -12:30 pm

Location:

Meet at St Paul's Rd Carpark, MPNP Sorrento, 3943

Cost: FREE

To book: Mobile 0408 877 852 (Ursula)
info@nepeanconservationgroup.org.au



Volunteer opportunity:

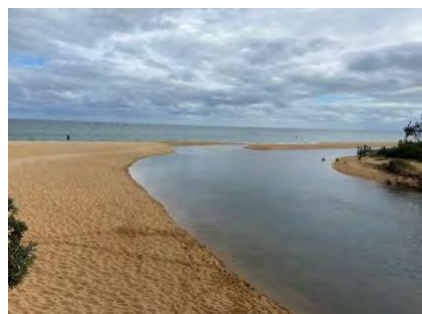
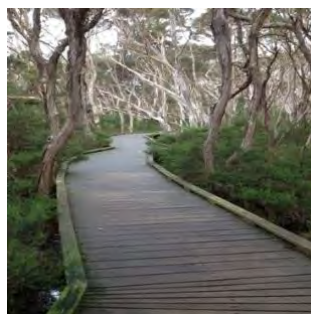
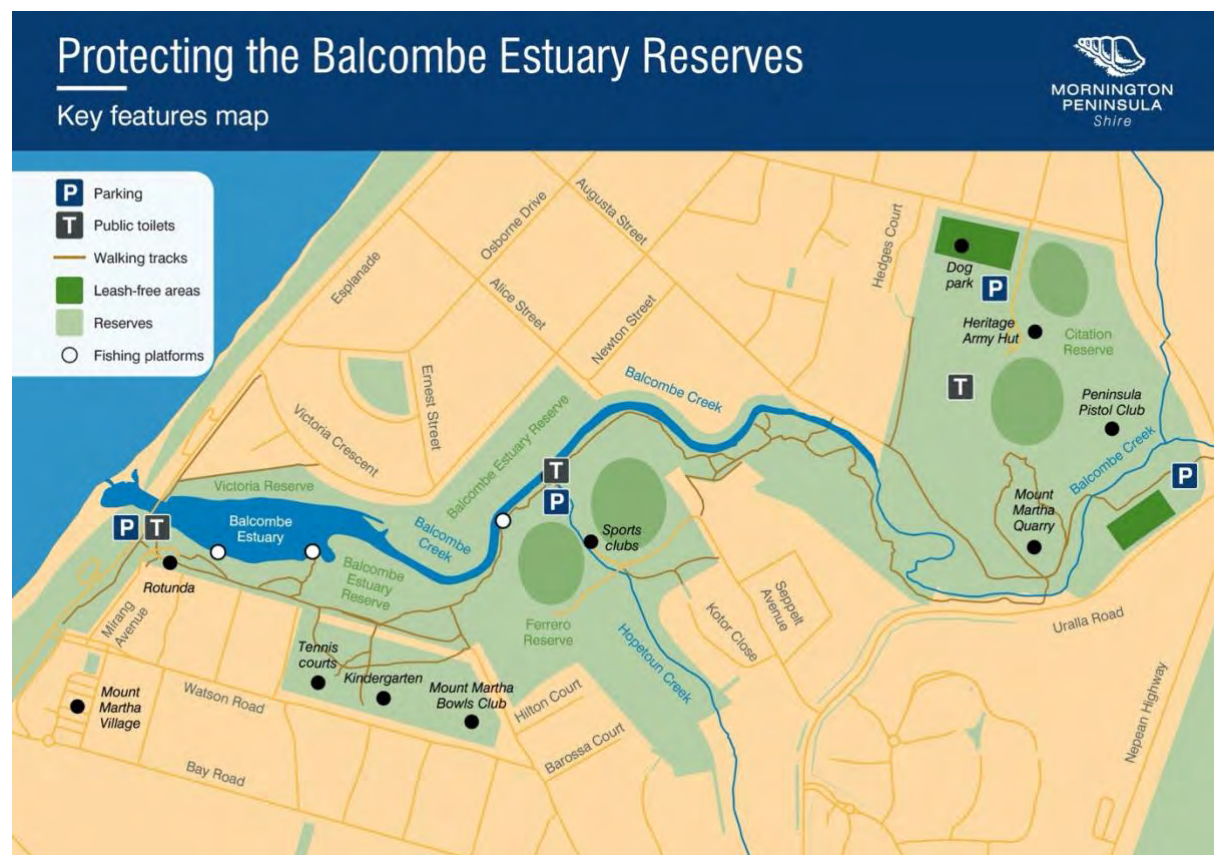
Friday 30 October, NCG stall outside CBA Bank Sorrento, Ocean Beach

Road, 10.00am-2.00 pm. Thank you to Jane Byrne, our vice president for organising this. We would like some volunteers to hand out brochures, postcards, and chat to people about the NCG, the work we do and invite them to join the NCG. Plus an opportunity to sign up for the MPS Senior's Festival NCG ramble from St Paul's to the Sphinx on Saturday 31 October 2026! Please reply to info@nepeanconservationgroup.org.au
We need your help and would love to see you!

NCG November ramble

Balcombe Creek walk - Sunday 29 November 2026 – 8.00 am start, picnic to follow if people wish. Thank you to John Trewarne for organising this ramble.

Save the date – more info closer to the time. Note early start – to catch the birds!





Peregrine falcons nesting in the cliffs at The Divide above and detail below September 2026. Update 8 October 2026 – chicks hatched. At least one spotted as mum moved around. She has made a hollow in the sand to accommodate them.





NCG GRANTS AND WORKING BEES

2025-2026 COAST CARE GRANT SORRENTO BACK BEACH COMPLETED

This grant has now been successfully signed off and the NCG UNSUCCESSFULLY applied for another so that we can continue this critical work to nurture this sensitive environment in this magnificent coastal location.

[Watch this space for NCG working bees to undertake follow up work.](#)

2025-2026 MPS PLACE MAKING GRANT Bridgewater Bay wild coast precinct successfully completed

The NCG has worked to restore and conserve the biodiversity values of the coastal environment of the Bridgewater Bay area in Blairgowrie. This has included removal and control of woody weeds, handweeding to augment natural regeneration, and propagating and supplemental planting of indigenous plants belonging to the endangered moonah woodland habitat.



Bridgewater Bay, MPNP, Spring view showing the healthy bushland environment created over 4 years of work through MPS Biolinks and placemaking grants, PPBF grants, and Landcare grants. Photo U de Jong 6 Oct 2026. Follow up NCG working bees will be organised.

Bridgewater Bay precinct includes the Linear Bushland Reserve along St JohnsWood Road, the car park reserve, the Bridgewater Bay corridor to Jack Ritchie Track "the Bandicoot walk"; the E G Ritchie and Sid Baker Bushland reserves, the Puggle Walk and Sinclair Street Pocket Reserves, as well pockets of bushland verges. The NCG and Friends Groups worked to establish green links in this precinct - a habitat corridor for wildlife, flora and fauna. This grant support has been vital for ongoing environmental work to ensure the longevity of our fragile natural coastal habitat. This project augmented existing initiatives to provide major benefits for community and environment.

Contractor work to remove woody weeds and mulch them down in place, opened up space enabling the regeneration of indigenous plants, and provided opportunity for supplemental planting. We worked with local Friends Groups working additional working bees; local community volunteers helping with supplemental planting; and children from St Joseph's Primary School, Sorrento, who propagated plants and helped with two working bees for supplemental planting in this precinct. Follow up rains have given the plants a good start.

This project was undertaken with the support of MPS and Parks Victoria - partnerships with both organisations have been further strengthened through this grant. Partnership between NCG and BPSMA [Blairgowrie Private Streets Maintenance Association] have been ongoing and collaboration has proven fruitful in attracting community volunteers for ad hoc working bees, and planting sessions across the precinct. Many residents have also nurtured indigenous species in their verges. The partnership with St Joseph's Primary School, Sorrento, has been amazing - the children under the guidance of Jane Byrne have propagated plants collected from local seeds, and grown them to plant in the Linear Bushland Reserve along St JohnsWood Road, and the Bridgewater Bay corridor to Jack Ritchie Track. The children have undertaken two working bees under this grant, planting in the Linear Bushland Reserve along St JohnsWood Road, near the MPNP carpark interface.

The MPSC support is gratefully acknowledged. More recently Dr de Jong delivered a presentation at the Environment Circle on 16 July 2026, titled "Caring for the environment on the Nepean Peninsula", which highlighted the importance of grants to undertake critical environmental work. This project was featured, so attendees could understand the importance of precincts and habitat corridors to nurture biodiversity and develop resilience in the face of climate change and global warming.

2025-2026 Port Philip Bay Fund grant is progressing well

The progress report was submitted, reviewed and accepted.

DEECA responded: "Thank you to the Nepean Conservation Group for your ongoing efforts and commitment to improving the health of Port Phillip Bay's bushland reserves. It is great to see the progress being made across the project sites. As a reminder, the next milestone is the Completion Report, due 30 April 2027".



Police Point – woody and scrambler weeding (.91ha)



Sorrento foreshore – chainsawing assistance where required in working bee area (1.35ha)



Tuckey Track – woody weeding and chipping (.11ha)



Rye foreshore – woody and scrambler weed control (.21ha)

Breaking News 9 OCTOBER 2026

2026-2027 MPS PLACE MAKING GRANT SUCCESS

Project Name: Rehabilitating a coastal habitat – French St Reserve Rye

Value of Grant: \$14,538.60

This is a new partnership for the NCG with the Friends Group at French St Reserve. We are looking forward to being engaged and supporting these great volunteers, and with the help of NatureLinks contractors removing woody and scrambling weeds. This is a fabulous open space for community recreation with some really good areas of indigenous vegetation, which we are looking to enhance. Community engagement is part of the vision – if we nurture Nature, Nature will nurture us! A couple of events will be organised in 2027 for the local and NCG community!



Site visit MPNP and PNNP 31 July 2026, 10.30am -3.00pm

Parks Victoria and Nepean Conservation Group Inc

Participants: Lee Miezis, PV CEO, Adrian Browne PV Metropolitan Parks, Ursula de Jong, President, NCG Inc, Eddy de Jong, Secretary, NCG Inc

Time	Meeting place		Discussion points
10.30am	Former PV Ticket Hut, Ocean Beach Road, Sorrento Back Beach, MPNP	Walk track to Coppins Lookout, around the rim of the amphitheatre	Natural environment – the work of NCG Inc 2025 Coast Care grant – completed 31 May 2026
			Infrastructure condition and upkeep – include tracks, stairs and roads
11.00 am		Coppins Lookout	Disintegrating infrastructure; importance of the lookout to tens of thousands of visitors
			SSLSC; impact on the environment; community facilities; infrastructure; reinstatement of the environment?
			Classified as emergency shelter – not built for purpose
			Rock pool and intertidal zone view from the top – the case against a “man-made” concrete structure
		Stairs down to the Sphinx	Issues impacting the structural stability highlighted
			NCG in partnership with PV applying for a 2026 PPBF \$200k environment grant
		Stairs down to carpark	Infrastructure – poor condition of stairs, ramps, carpark etc
		Walk up to Former PV Ticket Hut, Ocean Beach Road	Note impact of SSLSC on this extraordinarily beautiful coastal precinct; car park not fit for purpose; collapsing infrastructure underpinning road – only access to SBB
12.35-1.00pm	Drive Sorrento to PNNP	Stand up lunch	Discussion of issues so far; PNNP overview
1.00pm	Quarantine Station, PNNP	QS University development	Updates on adaptive reuse of Badcoe Hall; who has oversight of the project on behalf of PV/ DEECA? First and second-class buildings and dining room visited and potential use discussed; 1960s building in deplorable state.
		Camp site, and PSLSC proposed new SLSC in PNNP, Ticonderoga Bay	PNNP 2017 Master Plan - adaptive re-use of existing buildings highlighted; tidal dangers of site noted; significant erosion impeding access to beach; middens and cultural heritage evident everywhere
		QS 19thC buildings	PV as custodian of heritage: upkeep? Plans for re-use? Opportunities and challenges discussed
	Gunners Cottage	Gunners Cottage	Coles Track Interpretation reviewed
2.30-3.00pm	Tip of PNNP/ the Heads	Natural and cultural heritage	Dynamic coast: erosion impact on the natural and the built heritage; opportunities and challenges discussed
Conclude at 3.00pm		Final discussion; summing up	Issues facing the MPNP and PNNP – noting that these are not “metropolitan” parks Balancing values – natural, recreational/tourism Issues facing PV in role to protect the Parks Estate Opportunities for PV to work with the community

Outcomes and decisions since visit:

This proved a most fruitful day for PV and NCG. Lee Miezis and Adrian Browne were most appreciative of an on-ground visit with the NCG, and a community perspective on these two significant National Parks.

PSLSC not going ahead at PNNP due to cultural heritage and erosion issues; proposed new concrete rock pool at Sorrento Back Beach not going ahead – natural pools to be kept on rock shelf; work to restore Coppins Lookout undertaken, open and complete. Assessment of infrastructure underway. PPBF grants not being offered in 2026 – so no application for significant environmental works in the SBB amphitheatre. The NCG searches for other suitable grants.



Sorrento Back Beach, Mornington Peninsula National Park, view from Coppins Lookout, showing edge of amphitheatre, car park, SSLSC and ocean beach sands - October 2026. Works nearing completion; temporary shipping containers housing the SSLSC have been removed. Builders scheduled to vacate site by end of November 2026. SSLSC to begin moving in early December and in action for the summer period. Below the rock shelf and rock pool, from Coppins Lookout – 8 October 2026 - which will remain as a natural coastal rock pool for the enjoyment of the local community, swimmers, families and visitors alike. This unique coastal ecology is now protected in our Mornington Peninsula National Park and available for ongoing study for our scientists and school and university groups. Photos: U de Jong.



NCG and our verges and indigenous plantings in our wildcoast sandy road precincts

On Thursday 3 September, the NCG walked the roads in the Bridgewater Bay precinct in Blairgowrie with the Ventia contractor and the MPS arborist, in anticipation of the shire pruning program. In October 2022 we walked the area and agreed on a 1m from roadside edge for pruning. This was implemented reasonably effectively and practically has worked. This distance has now been agreed again for the 2026 pruning. However, issues remain and we wrote to the Shire on 7 September.

Determination of the roadside edge – easily demarcated on made roads with curbs – is generally undefined in all of our unmade road precincts. This has meant that over the years the roads have been continually widened – as vegetation is pruned back and the grader moves further and further outwards each time the roads are graded. The next time pruning is required, the 1m is measured from the “new” edge, and more vegetation is lost.

We were advised to contact the MPS infrastructure department in order for the road edges to be determined more clearly, so that we can move forward with this year’s pruning, without detrimentally losing our indigenous vegetation on our verges, while at the same time complying with road safety measures.

Case study: the E G Ritchie Flora Fauna Memorial Bushland Reserve at the corner of Dana Ave and Summoner Street and the road edges. The Friends of E G Ritchie meet every first Sunday of the month and have been doing so for 30+years. They not only care for the reserve but have rehabilitated the verges along Dana Ave and Summoner Street. These provide protection for the reserve as well as a critical biodiversity habitat. They have planted the verges with indigenous grasses and small shrubs. They have put old tea tree logs along the edges to prevent cars and tradies driving over them and parking on them. The Friends ensure that the shrubs are pruned regularly as part of their working bees.



After the corner of the E G Ritchie Reserve was severely damaged in May 2025 [above] the Friends planted saltbush on the corner to protect what was left of the vegetation, and to allow the reserve to regenerate behind it. [see next page]. This was working successfully. The NCG were now told that this salt bush needs to be severely pruned back. This would leave the E G Ritchie reserve exposed to the same issues as previously. It was suggested that bollards be erected on the corner, to define the road clearly for all road traffic. The MPS has been asked for this over the past 10+years and it has been agreed through the Natural Systems team – but it has never eventuated. We were advised that it is the responsibility of the MPS infrastructure department.



Friends planted saltbush on the corner of Dana and Summoner Streets to protect what was left of the vegetation, and to allow the reserve to regenerate behind it. This photo shows the success of our strategy. [Photo August 2026].

While there is a particular issue at the corner of Dana Ave and Summoner Street, we are concerned for the indigenous vegetation of the verges abutting the E G Ritchie Reserve, and all the verges in the unmade roads precincts in the wildcoast. The various MPS policies pertaining to roads, verges, biodiversity and tree coverage should work together for the best outcome. If each policy is dealt with separately then we end up with poor outcomes. The NCG considers that nurturing a resilient environment is as important as maintaining safe roads.

We have major concerns around indigenous vegetation destruction with the contractors who are pruning the verges and following the roads policy only, without reference to any other policy. We understand that the roads in our unmade roads precincts are shared roads – cars, bikes, scooters, walkers – and must be safe for all. The road speed should also be commensurate with safe use by all these users and not privilege car users – the current legal 50kms per hour is not a safe speed for a shared road. 20kms per hour, which we have campaigned for, is a much safer speed mindful of all users on our sandy roads. This is a special coastal area – not an outer metropolitan suburb. These are small streets in a wildcoast area, not suburban streets.

We sought MPS help in implementing the bollards, discussing the roads and giving consideration to our unmade road precincts as special wild coast areas.

In spite of promised internal meetings across departments, no feedback has so far been received from the MPS. In the meantime, the verges have been severely “pruned” across all our sandy roads in the unmade precincts on the wildcoast and much of our thriving indigenous vegetation has been decimated.



Friends planted saltbush on the corner of Dana and Summoner Streets to protect what was left of the vegetation, and to allow the reserve to regenerate behind it. At the beginning of October 2026 all had been slashed – up to 3m into the verge at the edge of the E G Ritchie Bushland Reserve. All the regenerating *Leucopogon* and grasses in full bloom with shoots and seedheads have now gone [below Photo 4 October 2026]. The intersection now allows 4WDs with boats to do a full turn!



Sea Spurge Biocontrol Workshop

17th October 2026



Mornington
Peninsula Shire



Mornington
Peninsula
Landcare
Network



Nepean Peninsula
Landcare



Join CSIRO, Mornington Peninsula Landcare Network (MPLN) and Mornington Peninsula Shire for a free in-person presentation and hands-on event.

Presented by the CSIRO, the workshop will cover Sea Spurge ecology and impacts, current biocontrol research, release requirements, and African Boxthorn management. Participants can also attend a practical field demonstration at Rye Ocean Beach (booked separately). Morning tea provided!

Saturday 17 October 2026

9am – 1:15pm

Presentation & Morning Tea: 9:00am – 10:30am
Tootgarook Community Hall, 30 Barry Street,
Tootgarook

Field Demonstration (limited to 20
participants): 10:30am – 12:45pm
Rye Ocean Beach

Please note: The field component includes walking over uneven terrain and sand dunes. Bookings essential. Limited places available.

This free event is made possible through the support of Landcare Victoria Inc. and CSIRO, Mornington Peninsula Shire, and delivered by Mornington Peninsula Landcare Network (MPLN) and Nepean Peninsula Landcare.

The Mornington Peninsula [Landcare](#) Network (MPLN), Nepean Peninsula [Landcare](#), CSIRO and Mornington Peninsula Shire invite you to attend a [free Sea Spurge Biocontrol Training Day](#) focused on practical, science-based approaches to managing invasive coastal weeds.

This informative and hands-on workshop will provide participants with the opportunity to learn directly from CSIRO researchers and local land managers about the biological control of Sea Spurge (*Euphorbia paralias*), current research developments, release requirements for biological control agents, and broader invasive weed management approaches, including work being undertaken on African Boxthorn.

The event includes both an indoor presentation session and a field-based demonstration, allowing participants to gain practical experience and observe biocontrol release techniques in action.

Event Details

Date: Saturday 17 October

Location: Tootgarook Community Hall and Rye Ocean Beach

Times and Program Overview

9:00am – 10:30am

Presentation session and catered morning tea at Tootgarook Community Hall

10:30am – 10:45am

Free bus transfer to Rye Ocean Beach

10:45am – 12:15pm

Field demonstration and guided site visit

12:15pm – 1:00pm

Return transport, feedback and wrap-up

Presentation Topics

- Introduction to Sea Spurge, its lifecycle and impacts on coastal ecosystems
- Overview of the CSIRO Sea Spurge Biocontrol Project
- Biocontrol release requirements, including infestation size, density and timing
- African Boxthorn management and current CSIRO biocontrol investigations
- Current Sea Spurge management efforts on the Mornington Peninsula, including work undertaken by Mornington Peninsula Shire and Parks Victoria

Field Demonstration

Participants will:

- Join a guided walk to a Sea Spurge infestation site (approximately 300 metres one-way)
- Observe a Sea Spurge biocontrol release demonstration
- Participate in on-site discussions and learning opportunities with researchers and practitioners

What to Bring

- Enclosed walking shoes or boots
- Weather-appropriate clothing
- Hat and sunscreen
- Water bottle
- Notebook (optional)

Catering & Accessibility

Morning tea will be provided, including vegetarian, vegan and gluten-free options.

A complimentary bus transfer will be available between the hall and field site. Please note that the field session will be undertaken on uneven surfaces and sand dunes, limiting accessibility.

Registration

This is a **free event**, however registrations are essential as places are limited.

- **Field Demonstration Capacity:** 20 participants
- **Hall Presentation Capacity:** 50 participants

If attending both components of the day, please register for the **"Hall Presentation and Field Demonstration"** ticket.

If you only wish to attend the presentation session, please select the **"Hall Presentation Only"** ticket.

Given the high level of community interest, we kindly ask participants to register only if they intend to attend, ensuring as many volunteers and community members as possible can take part.

Register through the Mornington Peninsula **Landcare Network Eventbrite Link [HERE](#).**

Attached are some documents regarding the Sea spurge and African boxthorn biocontrol programs provided by the CSIRO, as well as an event flyer should you wish to share it with your groups.

We hope you can join us for this unique opportunity to learn about emerging biological control techniques and strengthen our collective capacity to manage invasive coastal weeds on the Mornington Peninsula.

RACHEL DEVLIN (she/her) | Biodiversity Officer

Email: rachel.devlin@mornpen.vic.gov.au

Phone: 03 5950 1034, 90 Besgrove Street, Rosebud VIC 3939

Connect with us! [Website](#) [Facebook](#) [Instagram](#)



From lab to land: strengthening coastal resilience through community-led sea spurge biocontrol

Sea spurge (*Euphorbia paralias*) is a coastal weed that threatens biodiversity and culturally significant sites across southern Australia. CSIRO has secured national funding to deploy the foliar blight fungus *Venturia paralias* as a safe and approved biocontrol agent to suppress sea spurge infestations and restore coastal resilience. Because the fungus does not spread quickly on its own, this project will rely on community-led release and monitoring to achieve widespread establishment. Through workshops, provision of release kits, and collaborative fieldwork, CSIRO invites government, community, and Indigenous partners to help deliver this exciting new biocontrol initiative and shape the future of weed management along Australia's coastlines.



Community-led biocontrol for African boxthorn and drought resilience

This project received funding from the Australian Government's Future Drought Fund

African boxthorn is a thorny, drought-hardy invader choking out native plants and degrading farmland across Australia. CSIRO is leading a national biocontrol initiative using the rust fungus *Puccinia rapipes*: a safe, approved biocontrol agent that weakens African boxthorn and supports ecological recovery across invaded landscapes. This project invites farmers, First Nations groups, and community stakeholders to receive biocontrol release kits, and take part in training for release and monitoring. By joining the national network, you will help suppress a major weed, build resilience to drought, and contribute to sustainable, community-led weed control.



Introducing African boxthorn and its impacts

African boxthorn (*Lycium ferocissimum*) is a highly invasive woody weed that threatens biodiversity, agricultural productivity, and drought resilience across Australia. It forms dense, thorny thickets that outcompete native vegetation, obstruct access to land, and degrade habitat for wildlife. Infestations are widespread in farming regions and natural

landscapes, particularly in areas already vulnerable to climate stress. Its resilience to drought and ability to spread rapidly make it a priority target for national biocontrol efforts.

A new biocontrol solution: a rust fungus, *Puccinia rapipes*

CSIRO is leading a national initiative to deploy the rust fungus *Puccinia rapipes* as a biocontrol agent against African boxthorn. This fungus has been approved as a safe, host-specific and effective tool for suppressing boxthorn infestations and improving drought resilience. Once established, it weakens boxthorn by damaging leaves and reducing plant vigour, which may help reduce fruit and seed production and limit spread and supports the recovery of native vegetation. Because the fungus does not spread rapidly on its own, human-assisted release is essential. Through mass-rearing facilities, biocontrol kits, and coordinated fieldwork, CSIRO and its partners will distribute the fungus to hundreds of sites across Australia, empowering communities to lead the charge in sustainable weed control.

Project overview

This new project is funded by the Australian Government's Future Drought Fund and delivered by CSIRO under the national 'Nation-wide Weed Biocontrol Mass-Rearing and Release Network for Enhanced Drought Resilience in Australia's Agricultural Landscapes' led by the Centre for Invasive Species Solutions. This new project supports community-led releases of a biocontrol agent to suppress African boxthorn and strengthen drought resilience across Australia's agricultural landscapes. Project activities will commence in October 2025 and run through to mid-2029.

Project goals include:

- Establish *Puccinia rapipes* at over 400 release sites nationwide.
- Reduce African boxthorn infestations and their impact on biodiversity and productivity.
- Enhance drought resilience through sustainable weed suppression.
- Build community capacity for long-term biocontrol and land management.

How you can get involved

CSIRO is inviting farmers, Indigenous groups, and community organisations to help roll out the new biocontrol solution for African boxthorn. Participants will be able to register interest and receive biocontrol kits containing the rust fungus *Puccinia rapipes*, along with clear instructions for its release and monitoring. You will be supported through workshops, training events, and field demonstrations to safely release the fungus and contribute data via national platforms. By joining the network of release sites, you will help suppress a major weed, strengthen drought resilience, and play a vital role in shaping the future of biocontrol in Australia.

Who eligible to participate

All interested stakeholders are welcome to participate in this project. CSIRO will provide the rust fungus *Puccinia rapipes*, along with training, release kits, and monitoring guidelines. Participants will contribute their time and effort to release the fungus at local sites and track its impact. This includes managing site access and any necessary approvals. The program is especially suited to farmers, community groups, and government agencies already working to control African boxthorn. A key focus is partnering with First Nations organisations to co-design and deliver biocontrol activities that reflect local values, knowledge systems, and land management priorities. We welcome conversations about how this engagement can be supported through training, funding, or other mechanisms.

To learn more, visit: <https://research.csiro.au/african-boxthorn/current-research/future-drought-funding/>

To submit an expression of interest, please email: boxthornbiocontrol@csiro.au.

As Australia's national science agency, CSIRO is solving the greatest challenges through innovative science and technology.

CSIRO. Creating a better future for everyone.

Contact us | 1300 363 400 | csiro.au/contact | csiro.au

If you would like to chat to someone on the CSIRO African boxthorn biocontrol team, please call:

Ben Gooden (02) 6218 3896

Caroline Delaisse (02) 6218 3525

research.csiro.au/African-boxthorn

Hooded Plover updates

The nesting and hatching season is in full swing.

Summary of the Mornington Peninsula as of 8 October 2026:

27 known nests

55 maximum eggs laid

8 failed at nest stage

6 current chicks

1 known failed chick

0 fledglings

The NCG is grateful to **Teresa Madgwick** for these amazing photos of a new Hooded Plover chick; a photo of a hooded plover chick with its parents, and a Hooded Plover family. Locations have been deliberately not disclosed in this Newssheet. The NCG thanks all those volunteers who monitor our MP beaches and coasts mornings and evenings on a daily basis to ensure as safe a breeding season as possible.





Portsea coastal erosion management

Help shape the future of Portsea Front Beach. Open for feedback; closes 31 October 2026



<https://engage.vic.gov.au/portsea-coastal-erosion-management>

Overview

Portsea Front Beach, located on the shoreline of Weeroona Bay in Port Phillip Bay, is a valued destination for recreation, tourism and community enjoyment. The eastern end of the beach has experienced significant erosion over many years, reducing beach access and increasing risks to public infrastructure.

A temporary geotextile seawall was installed by the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA), in 2010 and upgraded in 2019 to help stabilise the shoreline. While it has provided important protection, the structure is approaching the end of its 10-year design life and a longer-term solution is required to manage future erosion risks.

To support future planning DEECA commissioned an independent coastal engineering consultancy FSC Range, to review previous studies and undertake a comprehensive Coastal Processes Study. This work brought together more than 20 years of coastal investigations and improved understanding of the coastal processes driving erosion at Portsea Front Beach.

Drawing on this work, three potential long-term erosion management options have been developed by FSC Range for further consideration. A fourth option of a like-for-like replacement of the geotextile seawall (base case) is included. No preferred option has been selected. Community feedback will help DEECA understand local priorities, opportunities and concerns associated with each option and help inform future planning and decision-making alongside technical, environmental, cultural heritage, legislative and funding considerations.

Previous project stages

- Monitoring and management of erosion at Portsea Front Beach since 2010.
- Previous coastal investigations and assessment reports commissioned by the Victorian Government.
- The Peer Review and Coastal Processes Study and Adaption Planning Assessment undertaken by FSC Range to develop the potential long-term erosion management options.
- Design and delivery of repairs to extend the life of the existing geotextile seawall and maintain public safety.

Options being considered: Elevated Boardwalk option; Wave screen and groyne option; Beach compartments option; and Replacement geotextile Seawall option (base case).

PLEASE TAKE THE SURVEY AND/OR RESPOND WITH YOUR CONSIDERED OPINION.

View this email in your browser



Newsletter August 2026

Please find the MPS 2026 Spring Friends Groups Newsletter attached to this email – enjoy!



NCG letter to Anthony Marsh MP Nepean 7 October 2026

Thank you for sharing your updates as Member for Nepean.

As President of the Nepean Conservation Group Inc, I am writing to say that I note with some concern that there is no mention of the environment on the Mornington Peninsula, which encompasses both local and state issues. As you know the Mornington Peninsula is a most unique and precious environment, our natural environment being a key part of what makes the Peninsula such a special place to live, work and visit, but it needs our help. Much of our work depends on grants from the MPS, the State Government and various authorities, such as Landcare and Melbourne Water.

We have just been advised that “there will not be a Port Phillip Bay Fund grant round in 2026. The next round is anticipated to open for applications in mid-2027”. The NCG Inc and many other local and Friends Groups apply for this PPBF grant to undertake vital environmental work. This means one year’s funding has been excised from the environment, which means one year without follow up work, and one year without critical environmental work such as weeding and planting. This will set back the work of volunteers and exacerbate environmental conservation challenges and weed management.

The Mornington Peninsula environment features a diverse mix of rugged ocean coasts, calm bay beaches, and a green rural hinterland supporting a rich array of native biodiversity. ... The MP has a unique range of biodiversity and ecosystems. We are home to over 400 native animal species and roughly a fifth of Victoria’s total plant species across 65 different ecological vegetation classes. The MP includes the internationally

significant Western Port Ramsar Site and the state-significant Tootgarook Wetlands, featuring southern mangrove forests, saltmarshes, and seagrass meadows. Major natural areas are protected within the Mornington Peninsula National Park and Point Nepean National Park and conservation havens like Greens Bush and Arthur's Seat, with Parks Victoria needing further funding and resources. The MP is part of the UNESCO-declared Western Port Biosphere Reserve, recognised for its ecological importance.

The NCG Inc would be pleased to meet with you to discuss the environmental needs of the Nepean Peninsula, on the southern end of the MP, at your earliest convenience.

A reply has been received, and a date is being organised to catch up on site. Anthony Marsh has noted in particular "our concerns regarding the Port Phillip Bay Fund and would be interested to hear more about the impact the absence of a 2026 grant round will have on the Nepean Conservation Group and other local groups".



The August and September newsletters of the PCA are attached for your information.

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A shy silver eye, caught hopping between branches feeding on insects. SBB, MPNP, September 2026. Photo U de Jong

As always, we do welcome your feedback and engagement.
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