



NEPEAN CONSERVATION NEWS

WINTER 2019



*Above: Autumn Fungi, Photo: Ursula de Jong
Front Cover: Fragile coast. Photo: Rob Varney.*

Below: Point Nepean National Park walking track at the Heads. Photo: Lisa Howard



From the President

I write to you on a sunny winter Sunday afternoon. The next change is in the air, barometer heading down and a northerly blowing gently. Our NCG winter ramble took place this morning in Point Nepean National Park. A small group of us met at the disused visitor centre. Updates on the use of the old PV visitor centre were discussed: the Bunerong Land Council is working to make this a place for the Bunerong/ Boonwurrong people, to tell their stories, to recognise their long occupation of country, to keep their heritage alive. We wondered about it as a possible gateway to introduce visitors to Point Nepean – to aboriginal and natural heritage – before commencing their journey, their exploration, their visit to this unique national park. Today we walked the Wilson's Folly track to London Bridge and return. This interesting walk took us along ridges with wonderful views to Bass Strait across moonah forests, various woodlands and valley grasslands. Lots of interesting conversations and musings about making PNNP completely rabbit, fox and feral cat proof via a fence from London Bridge to the Bay. Views of London Bridge, Bass Strait and along the coast back to Portsea and Sorrento were truly magnificent – low tide revealed numerous rockpools and feeding birds, and long low rollers. The return trip was about 3.9 kms. A number of us then walked to Police Point Shire Park to get views across a very choppy Bay and into PNNP from the Commandant's House. We marvelled at the beauty of this place while recognising its fragility and the responsibility every one of us has to care for and protect it for future generations.

The NCG is battling to keep up with responding to reviews [eg Heritage Review stage 3, Blairgowrie, Sorrento and Portsea], planning policy changes [eg MP Neighbourhood Character Study],

budget submissions [NCG made three], and permits for developments [NCG submissions ongoing], as well as caring for bushland reserves and supporting our Friends Groups in their volunteer work on the ground [we now have nineteen groups under our umbrella]. Our committee attends the community coalition meetings every month to work productively with the Shire and other local groups. In this newsletter you will find reports on many of these activities as well as a request to continue to support us by renewing your membership [if you have not already done so before the end of the financial year] and inviting others to join; and remaining vigilant and alerting your committee to any concerns you may have. We also include excerpts from the UN Biodiversity report – which makes the work of the NCG very relevant and ever more pressing.

Thank you to your hard-working committee [Vice-president Ian Gray, Treasurer Gary Naughton, Company Secretary Eddy de Jong, Communications Officer John Atchison, Social Media Barend Frielink and Lisa Howard, Friends co-ordinators John Trewarne and Rhonda Day. Reviewing planning permits, policies etc are shared by the committee. Thank you to all our tireless committed Friends Groups [listed in this newsletter] - our bushland reserves have survived many months of dry windy weather, and June has seen a spate of planting and mulching as we have received some much-needed rain. There is always an open invitation to you, your families and friends to join wherever and whenever you can.

May the contents of this Newsletter spur you and those who care about the Nepean Peninsula into action.

Ursula de Jong

Thank you to Hannah Brown and Dan Suffern for the wonderful Friends get together on 25 March 2019 at Sorrento Community Centre – great to meet so many people from different friends groups and share stories and concerns.

Farewell and thank you to

Ruth Belfrage — an NCG committee member 2013 – 2018. Her enthusiasm for conservation was always infectious. We are pleased she remains a friend of a number of bushland reserves.

Ian Haskins — joined NCG Committee on 3.3.1984; Chairman 20.3.1988-27.3.1991; 19.7.92-22.3.06.

Received Rotary Community Service Award in 1999; a MPS achievement award in 2000 in the MPS “Year of the older Person”, and received OAM in 2009 for his conservation work. The NCG owes Ian a huge debt of thanks. Ian will be greatly missed for his tireless and dedicated efforts for conservation, for keeping abreast of all matters of concern and interest to the MP, and for his wisdom in dealing with complex and sometimes sensitive matters. We wish Ian and Enid well.

Ensuring that the built footprint has minimal impact. Photo Ursula de Jong

As a general rule, build below the tree line and not on ridges, always be respectful of place, and nurture habitat – the flora and fauna of the Nepean Peninsula.

Neighbourhood character have you had your say?

The Neighbourhood Character Study seeks to capture the unique values of the residential areas of the Mornington Peninsula to develop policy and guidelines to ensure better design outcomes for all residential areas across the Shire. Draft Neighbourhood Character Study, the MPS would like to know

- Does the preferred character statement for your area reflect your views?
- Do you support the recommended neighbourhood Character Precinct Boundary for your area?
- Do the design guidelines address the key characteristics of the area?

Please read the overall guidelines and principles, and then look at your area. Please send you review comments to the Shire. Email : haveyoursay@mornpen.vic.gov.au





Protecting moonahs on private land. Photo Ursula de Jong

A few thoughts from the NCG for your consideration:

**Ethos Urban Planning MP
Neighbourhood Character Study &
Guidelines Draft May/June 2019**

- Need to determine how the implementation of character statement for areas will strengthen planning provisions if these are not enforceable or recognized at VCAT. (p. 8)
- What happens after the Guidelines are finalised in Sept 2019? (p.11)
- Will the Sept 19 date for incorporation of the document be met as the programme is a month behind at this stage?
- Side and rear fencing should be considered as well as front fencing (p. 29, 41); No consideration given to side and rear fencing in draft character areas (pps. 98-102)
- It is important to maintain a significant area for re-landscaping with indigenous plants on all sides of the proposed building.
- Bush Coastal 2 Character areas not clearly defined on the map on page 97
- The Significant Landscape Overlay [SLO] map on p104 is poorly defined e.g Is Sorrento Settlers Cove estate excluded?
- Whilst it is suggested a permit will be required for vegetation removal in a SLO there is no indication of a replacement policy e.g 3 new indigenous plants for every 1 removed? Nor is there a size of the replacement plant provided.



Hill Holme. Photo Ursula de Jong, June 2019

Hill Holme: planning application P18/2059 855-865 Melbourne Rd Sorrento.

Details of the NCG objection to this large development provides you with a list of the concerns we have and gives you some idea of the work the committee needs to undertake when reviewing such permit applications. The NCG notes that it is proposed to use and develop this land for the purposes of a high-end retirement village apartment complex, consisting of 39 individual apartments. The complex itself is divided into four individual buildings with basement carparking and numerous facilities. The Nepean Conservation Group is committed to ensuring that the unique qualities of the Nepean Peninsula pertaining to natural and cultural heritage are retained and maintained. We

have objected to this proposed development on 6 grounds: 1. over-development; 2. not in keeping with neighbourhood character; 3. sustainability; 4. infrastructure; 5. heritage and 6. aboriginal heritage.

1. Over Development

- This development has not considered the context of a historic coastal village. The surrounding residential sites are of considerable size (over 4000M2) and are of low density providing a clear transition to the Sorrento township. This development seeks to increase the density by over 300%, detracting from the transition and village feel of Sorrento.
- The mass and bulk of the proposed buildings detracts from the historic coastal village

of Sorrento: a group of smaller buildings would be more appropriate.

- Full vegetation clearing is proposed. Historic and indigenous vegetation is not fully accounted for. Landscaping requirements are generally suburban/ urban in keeping with the proposed development, rather than specific to the coastal location, Refer to Clause 42.02 – Vegetation Protection Overlay - Schedule 1 (VPO1) within which this site sits.
- Exemptions are being proposed to planning regulations: maximum building height 8 m above NGL when the DDO2 Gen. Req. states 6 m; maximum wall height 8 m above NGL when the DDO2 Gen. Req. states 5.5 m; maximum extent of earthworks states maximum of 5.53 meters to accommodate the basement of Building A, when the DDO2 Gen. Req states 1 m; and so on.

2. Not in keeping with the Neighbourhood character

The design of rendered finishes, low pitched roofs (not visible from ground level), parapets and wall mouldings, does not reflect the coastal design of building in the Sorrento streetscape. The proposed design is more in keeping with buildings in urban Melbourne, such as Brighton, where bulky flat roof rendered buildings are the current trend. To suit Sorrento's neighbourhood character as set out

in the draft code (Bush Residential 1) buildings should be constructed of:

- A combination of material including horizontal boards, limestone, brickwork and some rendered finishes.
- Have pitched roof with a pitch of greater than 20 degrees and feature eaves.
- The roof top mechanical platforms have not been detailed and any equipment is expected to project above the roof giving a commercial look to the buildings.
- All plant should be located within the buildings or at ground level.

3. Sustainability

- Rain water harvesting – 60,000 litres in total is not sufficient.
- Energy rating – not shown
- Universal design – not addressed
- Accessibility – not shown
- Aging in place strategies – not shown
- Business plan and economic feasibility - Where is the business plan and an economic feasibility study which should accompany the application?

Overall a development such as a proposed retirement village should provide something that would contribute positively to Sorrento's sustainable future.

4. Infrastructure

The application indicates extensions to the council drainage system, asphalt surfacing of a road and road shaping improvements. Any proposed works to council assets must demonstrate community benefit beyond the proposed development. Any proposed works to council assets should be to the applicant's cost.

5. Heritage

The proposed development states that "The buildings have been designed to sit low within the site and appear subservient [NCG emphasis] to the heritage building when viewed from surrounding vantage points. To achieve this outcome, excavation is required at various points across the site in response to the varying topography which rises steadily to meet the level of the existing building at the rear".

While the development sits within an existing Heritage Overlay zone, Hill Holme is currently part of the recommendation before Council for the site to be made the subject of a Heritage Overlay with specific local heritage significance. That is a higher level of protection. This recommendation has emerged as part of the Heritage Review of Portsea, Sorrento and Blairgowrie. Citation no. 374 in the report by the Council's consultants, Heritage Alliance, sets out the argument. [Note - this Heritage Review is currently in draft form – with

comments invited to be submitted to the MPS].

The NCG considers that the heritage house Hill Holme needs further consideration. The Shire of Flinders Heritage Study Significant Sites and Areas Pt 2 pp 7-8 states:

"Hill Holme is a substantially intact example of a Victorian residence constructed of local limestone with the regional motif of red brick quoins and other decorative brick detailing. It retains some original joinery and is enhanced by a large elevated site".
"Its association with the pioneering Sorrento Spinner family, for a period of over one hundred years, makes this property of regional significance".
"... the property contains a cottage and Sorrento block stable/carport as outbuildings. It is set on an elevated large site with mature plantings, including a local landmark palm tree".
"This building is one of nine limestone residences in Melbourne Road between Ocean Beach Road and Hotham Road."

The house, Hill Holme is very significant for an understanding of the social history of Sorrento. In the proposed plans:

- There is an inadequate buffer around the house
- The sight lines to the house are compromised
- There is obstruction of views of the house by the reception zone
- The interior of the house is not to be retained in the proposed plans



Hermit Crab. Photo: Rob Varney, April 2019

6. Aboriginal heritage

The application notes that “Under the Aboriginal Heritage Regulations 2018, ‘areas of cultural heritage sensitivity’ are one part of a two part trigger which require a ‘Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP)’ be prepared where a listed ‘high impact activity’ is proposed. In this instance, the use and development of the land for a Retirement Village is deemed to be a ‘high impact activity’ under the Aboriginal Heritage Regulations 2018 and therefore a CHMP is required”. The report concludes that “This Desktop Assessment has identified that it is reasonably possible that Aboriginal

cultural heritage is present in the activity area”. The NCG highlights that approval by Aboriginal Affairs Victoria must be given prior to a decision of Council.

Slow walking along the coastal foreshores and look what I can see:

Hermit Crab (above)

Veletta a very small predatory animal similar to the sea slug, nudibranch family wash in or sail in on the beaches on the southern peninsula found at The Cutting Portsea (pg 17)

Limestone

The Limestone of the Nepean Peninsula is an integral part of our built heritage. On Friday 7 June 2019, Ron Blackford master stonemason and Geoff Coker limestone raconteur spoke at the Nepean Historical Society monthly speaker series, telling us a little about where limestone comes from, what has been built with it in Portsea and Sorrento, and considering the future of this iconic material. We have all seen lumps along the coast, in our gardens, and along the walking tracks in the Mornington Peninsula National Park. We have also admired local houses and commercial buildings built of the material. The Continental Hotel being the largest in Sorrento, but it also the largest limestone structure in Australia. Limestone is generally found in shallow reefs, and sometimes comes in single deposits. It is a relatively soft stone and subject to blowouts over time. In the 19th and early 20th centuries it generally had an axe faced finish, which gives it a very tactile sculptural quality. Today's stone is machine finished to conserve as much of the stone as possible and minimise wastage, but also to save on labour costs. It was revealed that the future of our stock of limestone buildings is not assured: there is need of a good supply of local limestone as well as more skilled craftsmen to restore /renovate them.



The Continental Hotel, Sorrento

On 7 May 2019 the NCG wrote to the Shire, with copies to Heritage Victoria and to the National Trust to express our concerns. Construction activities at the Continental Hotel Development site have completely stopped since almost two months. Recent reports in the press indicate that the project has run into financial difficulties and it is not clear if and when renovation and construction will resume. The Nepean Conservation Group has serious concerns about the state of the Continental and seeks the following clarifications from the Shire.

Firstly, what has been done, or will be done, to ensure that the existing heritage buildings have been left in a safe and appropriate manner so that no damage will occur from the elements, vandalism or other causes? We note, for example, that one building has been left without roof or other protection against rain etc.

Secondly, the large and deep hole at the back of the old Continental building could be a serious threat to the heritage building if the hole is left for an extended period of time. There is a real danger that the hole will result in earth movements and shifting of walls. We urge the Shire to send a structural engineer to investigate and report on this issue. Thirdly, we would like to learn what the likely timeframe for resumption of the work will be. The longer the site remains in limbo, the higher the risk is to this unique heritage building, to the community and to the character of the Sorrento township.

The Shire and Heritage Victoria responded to the NCG stating that the developer had been asked to put tarpaulins in place to cover exposed parts of the building. The NCG wrote again to the Shire and to Heritage Victoria on 20 May 2019, stating that the Nepean Conservation Group is concerned about the safety, structural stability and potential for degradation of the abandoned works of refurbishment of the 1880s limestone structure known as the Continental Hotel at 1-21a Ocean Beach Road, Sorrento.

NCG committee member, John Atchison, a structural engineer, inspected and photographed the Conti from the perimeter of the site, which revealed the following:

Incomplete retaining structures:

The works have involved excavating to approximately 10 metres below the surrounding ground levels and up to the existing building. The retaining structures are incomplete with concreting of the infills between the piles not finished, exposing the retained soil to erosion



Photos of the Conti: May 2019. Photos: Ursula de Jong

and possible collapse. The condition of the earth anchors is unknown.

Storm Water collection: We have been advised that Heritage Victoria have instructed the builder to install tarpaulins over the roof of the single level structure however this will not address the collection of stormwater from upper roofs which, at present, discharges across the structure due to removal of guttering and downpipes. The lack of collection and disposal of stormwater could cause deterioration of the delicate limestone structure.

Roofs and terraces: the verandah roofs have been removed and not replaced. This could cause deterioration of the limestone structure and water penetration into the floors of the building, causing deterioration of the flooring and structural elements.

Windows and wall openings: There are numerous unsealed windows and open walls that are allowing water entry into the building which could cause damage to walls and floors.

Structural repairs: It appears that structural repairs to a corner of the building are incomplete. Lack of completion could cause deterioration of the structure. Other structural works are not visible from the perimeter and should be inspected by a structural engineer to determine the long term stability of this historic building.

The NCG requested that the council Municipal Building Surveyor inspects the building with a suitably qualified independent structural engineer to determine whether the existing building and new structures are safe and issue an Emergency Order if the stability is found



Photos of the Conti: May 2019. Photos: Ursula de Jong

lacking or the building will suffer from deterioration due to exposure. The NCG stated that a member of our committee is a structural engineer who has experience in refurbishment of distressed building and reinstatement of damaged buildings and offered his availability to undertake an inspection with Shire personnel.

On 30 May, David Kotsiakos, MPS Manager Municipal Building Surveyor organised two staff to meet on site with the Developer and Heritage Victoria. On 5 June David Bergin, MPS, Director Planning & Building provided NCG with an update following the site meeting at the Continental Hotel undertaken by Heritage Victoria (“attended also by Council’s Building team only in an observation capacity as we do not have authority under the Heritage Act”). At this site visit a number of actions were required to be implemented to ensure this State heritage listed property is protected from the elements until construction commences on site again. Heritage Victoria has recently written to the land owner requiring that a number of actions be undertaken to make the building ‘weather proof’.

The various actions are required to be completed by the end of June 2019. Heritage Victoria has also requested a report on temporary works and measures and a works program to ensure the protection of the important features (including structural features) of

the building. The report sought by Heritage Victoria should also identify a temporary roof plumbing solution that will respond to the management of water discharged from the roof in response to missing and damaged guttering and downpipes.

The Private Building Surveyor (PBS) who issued the building permit has been contacted by Council’s Building team and they have also instructed the project builder and structural engineer to undertake a report to check the stability of the site. The Builder has confirmed that the basement walls are currently being monitored by a Land Surveyor on a weekly basis to check for any movement. If any movement is detected remedial works will be ordered by the (PBS), alternatively escalated via Council’s Building Department. Further the Shire Council’s Building team will continue to undertake a regular drive-by of the site.

Members of the NCG committee continue to monitor progress of remedial works and also monitor the site from the perimeter. Our concerns for the future of the Conti have not abated – on 5 June the Financial Review reported that Steller is in Liquidation. On 13 June we learned that the Conti is for sale for \$25m. The protection of this substantive historic structure is of upmost importance during this current uncertain phase.

SPOT NEWS: NCG has organised a community information meeting Sunday 30 June 2019.



Autumn Fungi. Photo: Ursula de Jong

Continental Hotel: Constitution Hill Road and Ocean Beach Road precincts

In March 2019 two planning applications were submitted to the MPS - for the development of streetscape works on the road reserve by the Continental Hotel in Sorrento: along Constitution Hill Road an application for the widening of the footpath and landscape works including vegetation removal. And along Ocean Beach Road for the development of buildings and works on the Ocean Beach Road reserve adjacent to the Conti, including demolition and removal of seven car parking spaces, new outdoor dining areas and footpath treatment/

landscape works and vegetation removal. The NCG submitted two substantial objections to this work, in relation to the

1. Consideration of planning applications relating to The Continental Hotel,
2. Planning consultation process,
3. Privatisation of public space and
4. Implications for traffic plans and car parking for Sorrento.

Re: Consideration of planning applications relating to The Continental Hotel. The NCG considers that it is neither strategic, nor good planning practice to consider such permit applications piecemeal, ie CHR and OBR separately. The Continental Hotel sits on a significant corner location: at the corner of Constitution Hill Road and Ocean Beach Road. The site must be considered holistically,

the precinct must be considered holistically and the impact on the township must again be considered holistically. Considering such major works for a significant heritage building, a key Sorrento landmark site and gateway precinct as if they are separate, makes no planning sense, no urban design sense and no place-making sense. These two applications must speak to each other, and must be considered together to understand their combined impact on a significant heritage building, a key Sorrento landmark site and gateway precinct.

The NCG would also like to point out that the practice of reviewing planning applications for one project or contiguous projects incrementally leads to incremental change – often to the detriment of the building/site/ precinct and in this case township. It is to the developer's advantage to present each part individually and have them approved separately and out of the total context. Such planning decision-making is however overwhelmingly to the detriment of the township itself, to the precinct, the site and the building.

Re: 2. Planning consultation process: At no time was the community advised of design meetings that were taking place between Steller and the MPS planning officers and /or councillors ; nor were they invited to participate. So rather than having input at the beginning and being

part of discussions, the community is left again to object at the end of a process – this process is an unacceptable way of doing business: is not productive for the developers, the Council, the community or in the end the township of Sorrento itself. We again, as we have in the past, submit that all interested parties be included from the outset so that all are informed, all have a say and a better outcome can be arrived at. Community consultation will always strengthen the outcomes of projects such as this.

Re: 3 Privatisation of public space: The proposed works on Ocean Beach Road and at Constitution Hill Road adjacent to the Continental Hotel include the public footpath beside it. This amounts to an effective privatisation of public land. The financial benefits of this will flow to the Hotel; there will be no perceptible benefit to the community, or the amenity of the Ocean Beach Precinct. The construction of decking, retaining walls and other permanent structures will benefit only the proprietors of the Hotel and are therefore not acceptable. There is minimal, if any, benefit for the general public with the so-called improved pedestrian traffic options. The natural pedestrian flow is along the Hotel wall, and that pedestrian space should be generous enough to amplify the quality of the promenade which runs the full length of Ocean Beach Road [1000mm is not a suitable width

for this purpose]. This is significant from both a heritage, and a modern amenity perspective. In addition, from both a safety and an amenity perspective, pedestrians should not be required or encouraged to walk past the Hotel on a footpath that appears to be close to the edge of the road, given the proposed removal of parking at that point.

The permanent roof structure in front of the old store will obscure the view of this iconic heritage building from the street. In this context we agreed with the Nepean Ratepayers Association Inc that structures associated with commercial activities on the footpath should not enclose public spaces or adversely affect the openness of the footpath or create the effect of an outdoor room. The extension of the bistro, with the solid roof structure and solid planter boxes does in effect create an outside room and is non-compliant with the Guidelines.

Vegetation: the NCG highlighted that in consideration of the vegetation, no reference is made to lack of care and maintenance over many years, and the current severe deficit of rainfall. Therefore, these trees should be reviewed by the Shire's Natural Systems Team. Any trees and/or large shrubs, small shrubs and grasses etc must be cared for, with a regular program of watering, pruning etc in place. Consideration should also be given to the Ocean Beach Road spine of the whole

township of Sorrento. This is alluded to in the report in relation to "streetscape consistency". Planting decisions must be considered holistically, taking into account the significant historic building and its site, the precinct and the township.

Re: 4. Implications for traffic plans and car parking for Sorrento:

- The loss of on street parking – nine (9) not (7) spaces are to be removed. This is not acceptable in the absence of compensatory parking measures and a holistic parking strategy for the township.
- The proposed design layout appears intended to move pedestrians off the current footpath to the exterior of the proposed permanent Continental Hotel outdoor footpath dining area, so as not to inconvenience the patrons of the Continental Hotel. Pedestrians will be expected to walk alongside the through traffic in Ocean Beach Road. Safety of pedestrians should be a major consideration.
- There is no indication how the changes proposed to Constitution Hill Road and Ocean Beach Road will impact the wider intersection, for vehicular and pedestrian traffic, nor how this will be handled by MPSC. This is the main "gateway" to the historic coastal township of Sorrento – it must be considered holistically. Nowhere is there a discussion of the implications of this privatisation of public land for the actual traffic flow in this busy intersection of Constitution Hill Road and Ocean Beach Road.

In response to our written objections the NCG was invited to meet with Sarah Pozzebon at Pittard Group (previously Steller) on 28 May 2019. The NCG has been informed that the MPSC will be considering the applications at their July 2019 meeting, so the NCG committee will discuss and formalise a response to council at our June 2019 strategic meeting.



Sea Anemone at London Bridge, April 2019.
Photo Rob Varney



Ocean bubbles on the rock platforms at low tide, May 2019. Photo Ursula de Jong

UN Report: Nature's Dangerous Decline 'Unprecedented'; Species Extinction Rates 'Accelerating'

<https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/blog/2019/05/nature-decline-unprecedented-report/>

It supports the works of the NCG as high priority and essential for the wellbeing of the planet [and humans]. Current global response insufficient; 'Transformative changes' needed to restore and protect nature; Opposition from vested interests can be overcome for public good. Most comprehensive assessment of its kind; 1,000,000 species threatened with extinction

PARIS, 6 May

Nature is declining globally at rates unprecedented in human history – and the rate of species extinctions is accelerating, with grave impacts on people around the world now likely, warns a landmark new report from the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), the summary of which was approved at the 7th session of the IPBES Plenary meeting 29 April – 4 May 2019 in Paris.

"The overwhelming evidence of the IPBES Global Assessment, from a wide range of different fields of knowledge, presents an



Veletta on the beaches on the southern peninsula found at The Cutting Portsea, photo Rob Varney, April 2019

ominous picture,” said IPBES Chair, Sir Robert Watson. “The health of ecosystems on which we and all other species depend is deteriorating more rapidly than ever. We are eroding the very foundations of our economies, livelihoods, food security, health and quality of life worldwide.”

“The Report also tells us that it is not too late to make a difference, but only if we start now at every level from local to global,” he said. “Through ‘transformative change’, nature can still be conserved, restored and used sustainably – this is also key to meeting most other global goals. By transformative change, we mean a fundamental, system-wide reorganization across technological, economic and social factors, including paradigms, goals and values.”

“The member States of IPBES Plenary have now acknowledged

that, by its very nature, transformative change can expect opposition from those with interests vested in the status quo, but also that such opposition can be overcome for the broader public good,” Watson said.

The IPBES Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services is the most comprehensive ever completed. It is the first intergovernmental Report of its kind and builds on the landmark Millennium Ecosystem Assessment of 2005, introducing innovative ways of evaluating evidence. ... The Report assesses changes over the past five decades, providing a comprehensive picture of the relationship between economic development pathways and their impacts on nature. It also offers a range of possible scenarios for the coming decades.

“Biodiversity and nature’s contributions to people are our common heritage and humanity’s most important life-supporting ‘safety net’. But our safety net is stretched almost to breaking point,” said Prof. Sandra Díaz (Argentina), who co-chaired the Assessment with Prof. Josef Settele (Germany) and Prof. Eduardo S. Brondízio (Brazil and USA). “The diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems, as well as many fundamental contributions we derive from nature, are declining fast, although we still have the means to ensure a sustainable future for people and the planet.”

The Report finds that around 1 million animal and plant species are now threatened with extinction, many within decades, more than ever before in human history.

“Ecosystems, species, wild populations, local varieties and breeds of domesticated plants and animals are shrinking, deteriorating or vanishing. The essential, interconnected web of life on Earth is getting smaller and increasingly frayed,” said Prof. Settele. “This loss is a direct result of human activity and constitutes a direct threat to human well-being in all regions of the world.”

To increase the policy-relevance of the Report, the assessment’s authors have ranked the five direct drivers of change in nature with the largest relative global impacts so far.

These culprits are, in descending order: (1) changes in land and sea use; (2) direct exploitation of organisms; (3) climate change; (4) pollution and (5) invasive alien species.

Despite progress to conserve nature and implement policies, the Report also finds that global goals for conserving and sustainably using nature and achieving sustainability cannot be met by current trajectories, and goals for 2030 and beyond may only be achieved through transformative changes across economic, social, political and technological factors. Loss of biodiversity is shown to be not only an environmental issue, but also a developmental, economic, security, social and moral issue as well.

Notable findings of the Report include:

- Three-quarters of the land-based environment and about 66% of the marine environment have been significantly altered by human actions. On average these trends have been less severe or avoided in areas held or managed by Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities.
- More than a third of the world’s land surface and nearly 75% of freshwater resources are now devoted to crop or livestock production.
- The value of agricultural crop production has increased by about 300% since 1970, raw timber harvest has risen by 45%

and approximately 60 billion tons of renewable and nonrenewable resources are now extracted globally every year – doubling since 1980.

- Land degradation has reduced the productivity of 23% of the global land surface, up to US\$577 billion in annual global crops are at risk from pollinator loss and 100-300 million people are at increased risk of floods and hurricanes because of loss of coastal habitats and protection.
- In 2015, 33% of marine fish stocks were being harvested at unsustainable levels; 60% were maximally sustainably fished, with just 7% harvested at levels lower than what can be sustainably fished.
- Urban areas have more than doubled since 1992.
- Plastic pollution has increased tenfold since 1980; 300-400 million tons of heavy metals, solvents, toxic sludge and other wastes from industrial facilities are dumped annually into the world's waters, and fertilizers entering coastal ecosystems have produced more than 400 ocean 'dead zones', totaling more than 245,000 km² – a combined area greater than that of the United Kingdom.
- Negative trends in nature will continue to 2050 and beyond in all of the policy scenarios explored in the Report, except

those that include transformative change – due to the projected impacts of increasing land-use change, exploitation of organisms and climate change, although with significant differences between regions.

The NCG thinks globally and acts locally – your help and support and the works of dozens of Friends does make a difference.



Friends of the E.G.Ritchie Reserve, June 2019, Margaret Finger.

Photo Ursula de Jong

Submission by Nepean Conservation Group Inc (NCG) to Mornington Peninsula Shire Council, s233 budget submission process April 2019.

Flinders Street Bushland Reserve:

Application for funds to develop a Community Engagement Plan (CEP) for land recently acquired by the Mornington Peninsula Shire for use as community open space, with an emphasis on active engagement of the community in the conservation of the biodiversity of the area. This is 3.1 hectares of bushland at 50 Flinders Street Rye, to be restored and cared for as a bushland reserve. NCG wants firstly to promote community appreciation of the natural environment and promote mental and physical well-being by enjoyment of and involvement in nature; and second, to produce a set of recommendations to Council on how best to use the site to balance conservation of the bushland habitat and its biodiversity values, access and education of the community.

Re-connecting to place: This application is for funds to develop community education materials for the Nepean Peninsula on the Mornington Peninsula, in conjunction with the primary and secondary schools in our area, the MPS Natural systems team and Parks Victoria. The NCG will also work with local community groups. People of all ages will be able to engage with the sense of place of the Nepean Peninsula. They will learn about the history, the geology, the local habitat, the biodiversity and the efforts being made to restore and care for this unique dynamic coastal environment. Stories of place - past, present and future are intertwined. The materials will be available online and as printed illustrated “maps” for use by children, families, locals, and visitors alike. Walks and rambles will be developed in Shire Bushland reserves, in the National Parks, in places variously valued for their indigenous, natural and cultural heritage. Packs of cards featuring flora, fauna, fungi, landscapes and historic buildings will also be developed. It was proposed that the Pilot program on the Nepean peninsula is to develop 6 walks over 12 months. The model which inspired this submission is Bush Trackers as successfully implemented in the Blue Mountains, NSW.



Sorrento in Winter, June 2019. Photo: Ursula de Jong

St Johns Wood Rd, Blairgowrie a joint submission with Community 3942:

1. Make St Johns Wood Rd a shared road: to develop plans and get approvals to make St Johns Wood Rd a shared road, giving pedestrians priority. Road calming measures need to be put in place, such as road narrowing, reducing road speeds, providing an accessible surface for all walkers, cyclists, and cars. It should remain an unmade road; and

2. Developing a linear bushland reserve along St Johns Wood Road: to develop a St Johns Wood Rd meandering walking track in the nature reserve from Old Melbourne Rd to the MPNP Bridgewater Bay carpark. The aim is to provide a bushland experience for locals and visitors, to remove weeds, to reinstate habitat and biodiversity, so that the nature reserve is restored and cared for as a linear bushland

reserve. The NCG will establish a Friends Group for this reserve.

UPDATE: NCG success: Cr Hugh Fraser informed the community on 12 June that a number of Community Submission were approved in the 19/20 budget vote on Tuesday 11 June. The NCG received \$20k for the Flinders Street Bushland Reserve; and we received \$40k for St Johns Wood Rd, Blairgowrie in a joint submission with Community 3942. It was suggested our Re-connecting to place project be undertaken with the Flinders Street Bushland Reserve. More in future communications.

On Wednesday 12 June NCG submitted a 2018-19 Victorian Landcare Grants Application for a project named "Bridgewater Bay Nepean Peninsula Bushland Reserves: weeding, regeneration, engagement".

EVENT: Joint Nature Stewardship Seminar

Date and Time: Sat., 6 July 2019, 9:30 am – 3:00 pm AEST

Location: The Royal Society of Victoria, 8 La Trobe Street, Melbourne, VIC 3000

On Saturday 6 July Victorian Environmental Friends Network [VEFN] is co-hosting a nature stewardship networking event, **Taking care of nature: linking backyards to bush**, with Gardens for Wildlife Victoria and the Royal Society of Victoria. The event will be held at the Royal Society conference centre, 8 LaTrobe St, opposite Carlton Gardens. Come join us to hear fascinating stories of people caring for nature in diverse and unexpected places, from schools to suburban gardens, creeks and nature reserves.

Be inspired, learn something new, network, and get involved! Places are limited. Hear fascinating stories of people caring for nature in diverse places, from schools to suburban gardens, creeks and nature reserves. How can this work transform a landscape? How do you start? Be inspired, learn what you can do, network and get involved!

Speakers include Peter Noble (Ballarat Environment Network – linking groups to transform landscapes), Irene Kelly and Kerry

Davies (Knox Gardens for Wildlife - linking schools and gardens for wildlife), Anthony Bigelow (First Friends of Dandenong Creek – crowdfunding and revitalising a Friends group), Charlotte Fletcher (Cranbourne Gardens, helping bandicoots from reserves to suburbs), amongst others. There will also be interactive sessions and networking. Morning tea and lunch served. Places are limited - please book if you know you can come. We look forward to seeing you there!

<https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/taking-care-of-nature-linking-backyards-to-bush-registration-63094707970>



*New Life after a dry Autumn.
Photo: Ursula de Jong*

Point Nepean National Park

The Point Nepean National Park Management Advisory Committee met on 29 May 2019. Updates were received on a number of issues including: Erosion at Point Nepean [hazard assessments being undertaken]; Sustainable Shuttle EOI; Coastrek Event; Harold Holt Memorial [will be simplified]; Officer and Cadet School remembrance site; visitation numbers [25% increase]; National Centre for Coasts and Climate Change (Melbourne and Monash Universities) - Hon Greg Hunt MLA made a pre-election commitment of \$25m to the University of Melbourne over four years to establish a program at PNNP. In 2016 an MOU between DELWP and UoM was put in place. This has enabled a framework for information exchange. Next steps are unclear. UoM need to submit a full proposal and business case to the State Government and Treasury. Protection of the intent of the Master Plan is of paramount importance.

This was followed by funded initiative updates: camping @ Point Nepean, amenity projects; and Defence Road Project – successfully completed. Buro North, Storytelling and Interpretation consultants, presented the next iteration of the Storytelling and Disinfecting Complex Uplift Project. Buro North have categorised all stories into

four themes: Bunerong, Quarantine, Military and Natural World. Robust discussion was had around these themes and how they reflected the Master Plan, around interpretation and the use of digital apps to augment and plan site visits. How do you organise the park? Visitors were to be allowed a set of journeys, to make sure that people understood the layering of stories. Questions were raised around the Master Plan proposition of a network of stories immersed in a spatial landscape and how this should govern the program. We were reminded that the Master Plan was a bipartisan agreement. The Bunerong Land Council will utilise the old visitor centre and so the location of the Park Visitor Centre, the central orientation place, was discussed in some detail. Hospital 3 was suggested for consideration. The next meeting is scheduled for November 2019.

Membership and archives

Membership: At the moment the NCG membership officer, John Franklin needs to update the Membership Database with additional data on renewals and new memberships. The good news is that it will result in less numbers of non-financial memberships for 2019! However, from our records there are over eighty memberships still not renewed for 2019. The committee has proposed to include a summary sheet for all memberships with this



Point Nepean Quarantine Station. Photo: Ursula de Jong

current Winter Newsletter [refer to insert]. This action should result in those only paid to 2018 hopefully renewing for 2019. At least all members on our database will be made aware of their membership status.

Archives: We have nearly completed the Archival Process by boxing up the bulk of it and storing it in the Storing Unit at Rosebud (at a cost of \$960 per annum OR a cost equivalent to 48 Single Memberships). The balance (Newsletters and some miscellaneous material) is still stored in a small room in the former Information Centre at Point Nepean. Gary Naughton and John Franklin have measured up one of the back rooms where the original old boxes were stored before processing and determined that all the processed

Archival material could be easily stored there.

The original agreement between the NCG and PV allowed for us to use the Centre for storing the Archives, but provided that we would have to remove it all within two weeks of PV wishing to use the Centre for another purpose. The NCG committee is now reviewing our situation: returning all the processed Archival material to the Centre to be stored in the back room is consistent with the original agreement, although for a longer period than initially considered. The NCG would have to be prepared to remove it all on request as stipulated in our current Agreement (back to a Storing Unit). In the meantime the NCG will continue to try and find a low cost permanent storing option for our archives by



Track for rambling, June 2019. Photo: Ursula de Jong

consulting further with the Shire. We will advise on our progress in the next newsletter. If any member knows of or are able to provide a suitable location for archives storage please let us know. In the meantime, the NCG owes a huge debt of thanks to Gary and John for sorting the NCG archival documents and putting them into archival boxes to ensure their longevity.

NCG Website and NCG Social Media

Our treasurer Gary Naughton has spent a considerable amount of time rebuilding our NCG Website. It is still a work in progress and we welcome any constructive comments from our members. To have a look at our NCG Website just type

Nepean Conservation Group into your favourite search engine.

<https://www.nepeanconservationgroup.org.au>

Barend Frielink and Lisa Howard have updated our NCG Facebook presence (<https://www.facebook.com/NepeanConservationGroup/>) and also created an NCG Instagram account (<https://www.instagram.com/nepeanconservationgroup/>).

Again we would ask you to have a look at these and follow us. We welcome any news items or photos with captions. We welcome any constructive comments. Please send your comments to info@nepeanconservationgroup.org.au

Back cover photo: surf fishing at London Bridge, photo Rob Varney

NCG FRIENDS GROUPS CONTACTS LIST

FRIENDS GROUPS SUPPORT SUBCOMMITTEE

LIAISON OFFICERS: John Trewarne, Ruth Belfrage

FIELD OFFICER: John Trewarne OFFICER: Danielle Suffern

Contact: friends@nepeanconservationgroup.org.au

AUTHORITIES

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(Nature Links) – Danielle Suffern daniellesuffern@naturelinks.com.au

Parks Victoria – Kris Rowe: Mornington Peninsula Area Officer kris.rowe@parks.vic.gov.au

FRIENDS GROUPS ASSOCIATED WITH NCG

FRIENDS OF BRIDGEWATER BAY

**Jack Ritchie Track Bushland Reserve,
51 Dana Avenue Blairgowrie.**

Blairgowrie (Melway 167 D4) SHIRE

CONTACT: Kate

friendsofbridgewaterbay@gmail.com

FRIENDS OF DIAMOND BAY Sorrento

(Melway 157 B11) PARKS

2nd Friday each month at 9.30 am

CONTACT: Richard Holland 0412 429 160

FRIENDS OF DIMMICKS BUSHLAND

RESERVE Blairgowrie (Melway 167 G7)
SHIRE

1st Sunday each month at 10am

CONTACT: Keith Murley 5988 9124

FRIENDS OF E.G. RITCHIE MEMORIAL

BUSHLAND RESERVE Blairgowrie
(Melway 167 D5) SHIRE

1st Sunday every month 9:00-11:00 am

CONTACT: Margaret Finger 59888

882; Ursula de Jong info@

nepeanconservationgroup.org.au

FRIENDS OF HOODED PLOVER

Mornington Peninsula PARKS

CONTACT: Diane Lewis 0419 320 205;

email: hploversmornpen@gmail.com

FRIENDS OF SID BAKER BUSHLAND

RESERVE Blairgowrie

(Melway 167 E4) SHIRE

3rd Sunday alternate months 10:12pm

CONTACT: Suzie Mac Farlane 9817 5139

FRIENDS OF SPRAY POINT WILD COAST CONSERVATION GROUP INC.

Blairgowrie

(Melway 167 B2) SHIRE AND PARKS

Annual plantings and Working Bees

CONTACT: Ann Hayman 0402 049 797

FRIENDS OF SULLIVAN BAY AND

WESTERN SISTER Sorrento

(Melway 157 F1) SHIRE

4th Friday each month at 2.00pm

CONTACT: Richard Holland 0412 429 160;

John Franklin 0437 350 061

TUCKEY TRACK FRIENDS GROUP

Sorrento (Melway 157 D10)

SHIRE AND PARKS

CONTACT: Julie Corridon juliecorridon@

hotmail.com

FRIENDS OF SLIPS RESERVE

Blairgowrie (Melway 167 CD1) SHIRE

The second Monday of each month from
1:30 to 3:30 pm.

CONTACT: Chris Ekinsmyth

Phone: 59887014

Tyrone Bushland Reserve, 7-17 Hibiscus Grove Rye.

OTHER FRIENDS GROUPS:

FRIENDS OF TYRONE FORESHORE

White Cliffs and Camerons Bight Foreshore
Reserve Committee of Management

Once a month alternating Saturdays and
Sundays

CONTACT: Terese Dalman: 0413 234 130

EMAIL: teresedalman@gmail.com



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