

SILVERLEAVES CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION INC.

Reg.no 0015325J

NEWSLETTER

September 2013



President's Report

A warm welcome to our new members

I am very pleased to welcome our new members to the SCA. Membership has now reached over 80 households which represents almost a third of all houses in Silverleaves! Your membership - and donations - are very much appreciated, as these greatly assist SCA carry on our activities and achieve our stated objectives:

- Retain and enhance the natural environment of Silverleaves
- Maintain the character of the area and protect it from inappropriate development
- Provide advice on ways to attract and protect native bird and animal life to the area
- Eradicate environmental weeds
- Conserve the foreshore and foreshore vegetation
- Protect and monitor wildlife
- Organise community work parties for foreshore weed removal and revegetation, road side planting and maintenance of the Silverleaves Reserve
- Provide communication and education to enable the Silverleaves community to remain up to date with news – SCA newsletter issued four times a year
- Provide a place where the Silverleaves community can express their views and be represented to official bodies

We rely on local support to continue the SCA's important work. Please encourage your friends, family and neighbours to join us to protect and enhance the natural beauty of Silverleaves.

Planning amendment C132 update

Following Bass Coast Shire Council's receipt of up to 78 submissions re C132, the majority AGAINST the proposal to rezone land on the corner of Settlement and Rhyll Rd to Special Use Zone thus enabling construction of a 120+ house suburb, SCA applied to present its objection at the C132 Panel Hearing in Cowes on Friday 2 August.

Thank you to our Committee Member, Ros Trayford, who presented for SCA and also Jane Westworth who gave her own submission. Ros kindly provided me with some detailed feedback from the Panel Hearing and a summary follows:

'A considerable effort was made by many to argue that the proposed development was not "integrated" i.e. it was just another lump of suburb with no real connection to the Golf Club. I found this argument fairly convincing and somewhat reinforced by the developers closing address spending some time defending the concept. Other issues such as sulphate soils, drainage, fill, traffic, bird and insect life, flooding and rising sea level all got some attention but in general tended to vagueness.

The Panel was at great pains to point out that this was the first step (C132) in a long possible approval process. It was also noted that Council approved C132 on a casting vote. It remained unclear how much the Golf Club would gain. The best guess seemed to be \$1000 per lot i.e. about \$120,000 all told plus four ha (enabling two extra fairways) which would replace the loss caused by the addition of a driving range - itself an uncertain generator of income. In other words the project may not cause the Golf Club to become financially viable. The panel has six weeks to forward the report and recommendation then Council another 30 days before making it public.

Another worrying point is that Council may consider funding the drainage works to the extent of \$300000. It's unclear how this supposition arises. To sum up no comfort could be gained from the very fair attitude and handling by the panel.'

President's Report (Cont.)

We will provide updates on progress as we learn more but reinforce our concern about this Proposal. If allowed, 'Waterville@Cowes' would urbanise what is currently an open and wild area bringing with it all the intended threats. This, together with individual 'creep' we're seeing in various Silverleaves i.e. inappropriate development applications and clearing of vegetation, and the monolithic problem of the proposed Port of Hasting development, mean we must maintain the fight on several fronts at once.

We are planning further updates on what you can do to help Save Westernport and Protect Silverleaves in our next newsletter. Meanwhile, thank you to everyone for their ongoing support. Keep the protests going - even verbal objections/feedback can make a difference!

M A Johnston

President

Working Bee Sunday 22 September 2013

What: Planting of Banksias, Lomandras, and other locally indigenous plants. Everyone who attends will receive a free Banksia to plant at their home.

Why: The Bass Coast Shire Council (BCSC) has recently employed contractors to remove Mirror bush and control other weeds such as English Ivy and kikuyu grass along the Silverleaves foreshore reserve. SCAs contribution is to help revegetate the area to restore it to its natural state – a Banksia woodland.

When: 10am – 12pm Sunday 22 September

Where: meet at the Silverleaves Store

What to bring: Yourself, friends, family and a good work ethic! Gloves, tools and planting materials will all be supplied by BCSC and Phillip Island Nature Park. The Nature Park recently donated \$500 worth of tools to SCA through a grant to aid and encourage the local community to conduct conservation works in the reserves around Silverleaves.

Weed of the month



Myrtle-leaf milkwort (polygala myrtifolia)

Myrtle-leaf milkwort is a robust, widely branching shrub one to two metres high. Flowers are purple, "butterfly shaped", and clustered near the tips of the branches. Fruit is a winged flattened capsule, ripening to a papery texture.

It grows rapidly and flowers when still young. Seed remains viable for at least three years and are spread from dumped garden waste, and in contaminated soil, sometimes by ants or birds and can germinate prolifically after disturbance, including fire.

Control

Numerous seedlings are likely to appear after disturbance, such as removal of mature plants, and follow-up control will be needed for at least three years. Mature plants cut off close to the base are not likely to re-sprout. This is easier than digging, and less likely to cause more seed germination.

Polygala can be found growing amongst the foreshore vegetation. An infestation was found recently growing near the East end of Silverleaves beach and one of the SCA committee members generously and in their own time cut them all down.

If you find any Polygala, Sea Spurge, Agapanthus, Ivy or any other weeds growing in the foreshore vegetation please notify the SCA Secretary Jarvis Weston 0413 386 049 (m) or email jarvis-kara@bigpond.com



The Swamp Wallaby

You may have seen around the Island and Silverleaves the local Swamp Wallaby. (*Wallabia bicolor*). The name *bicolor* comes from the distinct colouring variation, with the typical grey coat of the macropods varied with a dark brown to black region on the back, and light yellow to rufous orange on the chest. A light coloured cheek stripe is usually present, and extremities of the body generally show a darker colouring, except for the tip of the tail, which is often white.

The swamp wallaby can breed throughout the year. Gestation is from 33–38 days, leading to a single young. The young is carried in the pouch from 8–9 months, but will continue to suckle until about 15 months. The swamp wallaby is typically a solitary animal, but often aggregate into groups when feeding at night. It will eat a wide range of food plants, including shrubs, pasture, agricultural crops, and native and exotic vegetation.

There are quite a few living in the bush at Observation Point and the Rhyll Swamp and you may sometimes see Wallaby footprints on the beach. They can often be seen in the evening making their way through the foreshore vegetation on their way to visit our gardens at Silverleaves!

Many of the swamp wallabies are injured or killed as they feed on roadside verges especially at sunrise and sunset. **PLEASE DRIVE SLOWLY AND PROTECT THESE ISLAND LOCALS.**

Report injured wildlife to Phillip Island
Nature Parks 5951 2800

Summer is coming at Silverleaves

Silverleaves is blessed with wonderful vegetation which attracts a huge variety of bird and animal life. After the long drought and a very wet winter spring has arrived and the wildlife at Silverleaves is in abundance, including the rabbits!

You might see echidnas, possums, lizards and snakes, you will hear the Kookaburras, Magpies, Lorikeets, the noisy Wattle birds and if you look closely you will see Blue Wrens, Firetails and the Southern Yellow Robin.



Southern yellow Robin



The Little Wattle Bird (Honeyeater)



Superb Blue Wren

Dogs and Cats at Silverleaves

Help protect this unique area and keep control of your pets when they are outside. Bass Coast Shire and Phillip Island Nature Park have regulations about where and when dogs are allowed on the beach:

- 1 December to 30 April
7.00am – 10.00am and 5.00pm – 8 pm
- 1 May – 30 Nov - anytime

Dogs are not permitted on the beach from the east end of Silverleaves Road to Observation Point. Inform others of threats to nesting Hooded Plovers as the new breeding season commenced in August and will continue until March.

Roaming domestic cats are a significant problem to wildlife as they hunt small mammals, birds, reptiles and frogs. There are feral cats on the island which can spread diseases such as toxoplasmosis, which can infect humans and other mammals, and feline HIV that affects domestic cats.

We hope you have a wonderful summer at Silverleaves

FIRE SAFETY Please report directly to the police if you see any fires on the foreshore: ring 000 or Cowes Police Station (03) 59522037.

Be vigilant and prepared over the coming months and have your fire safety plan ready in the unlikely event of a fire in the area.

SCA Brochure

The SCA committee have been busy developing a brochure with information about the Silverleaves area, why it is so unique, how to retain and enhance the natural environment, conserve the foreshore and protect the native bird and animal life.

Can you help? We have a draft ready but don't have the necessary publishing skills and we are looking for a volunteer to help us design and format the brochure for printing.

If you think you might be able to assist us please contact the SCA Newsletter Editor by email myra.holmes.000@gmail.com

NEXT S.C.A. MEETING

- Saturday 23 November 2013
- 11.00am
- Meet at the Silverleaves Reserve

Please feel welcome to come to the meeting and hear more about SCA plans, put forward your ideas, and meet other residents of Silverleaves. We look forward to seeing you then.

SCA Membership

Only \$10.00 subscription for the year and donations are very welcome. The newsletter is now available by email. Complete the membership form with your cheque and send to:

The Secretary Silverleaves Conservation Association Inc
P.O.Box 9037 Cowes, VIC 3922

Or make a direct deposit online:
Bendigo Bank
BSB 633 000 Account 132 984 592.

If you have a story to tell about Silverleaves or would like to make a contribution to the newsletter please contact the SCA Newsletter Editor by email myra.holmes.000@gmail.com



Barb Martin Bushbank

The Barb Martin Bushbank is a not-for-profit nursery which grows plants indigenous to Phillip Island. The Bushbank specialises in drought tolerant, bird and wildlife attracting, habitat creating plants and is open to the public.

Opening times:

Wednesday 9:30am - 3:30pm
First Saturday each month 10am-1pm
Or by appointment: 0407 348 807

Location: Koala Conservation Centre
1810 Phillip Island Tourist Road.

SCA Diary for 2013

Committee Meeting: 23 November 2013

Working Bee: Sunday 22 September 2013