



President's Report

SCA Achievements for 2014

At the recent meeting of the SCA Committee held at Silverleaves General Store on November 23, we took a few moments to reflect on the organisation's past achievements. It's only two years since the SCA held its AGM and reviewed its purposes and objectives, elected new office bearers and Committee, and set up a campaigns approach to activities.

This structure has served us well, as has the work done on our mailing list to ensure residents and friends receive the newsletter and are included in activities and bulletins. In feedback we've received, it's clear many people understand and appreciate the unique environment that is Silverleaves - and want to preserve the special 'magic' of the area and the Island environment.

In 2014, SCA has had a number of successes in ensuring that Silverleaves is protected and enhanced. These include monitoring and protecting the shorebirds who live and visit the area, in particular the hooded plover's; major work to eradicate weeds and plant local native vegetation on the foreshow; fighting inappropriate development most notably the proposal to build 'Waterville at Cowes' on the corner of Coghlan and Rhyll Roads (defeated) and action against the development of a container port at Port of Hastings. We have also monitored and opposed smaller but no less inappropriate developments and activities within Silverleaves including illegal vegetation removal and overdevelopment.

We regularly make the point that Silverleaves is a fragile coastal zone which is home not just to people but to birds and other wildlife as well as native vegetation. It is not now, nor never should become, an urban area. It's gratifying that many residents and visitors understand this point and the environmental values of the area – and share the view that its relatively 'untouched' atmosphere must be retained.

It's worthy of reflection that December would have seen the 100th birthday of one of SCA's founders and champions, Ethel Temby (1915 – 2012). We think Ethel would be gratified to see not only SCA continuing on her vision but completing dynamic work, and achieving the sort of wins we have had in 2014. Our run rate also included our successful Grant application led by Jarvis Weston with funds put to good use for weed eradication, replanting, and the production of the SCA's new brochure.

SCA Brochure

The SCA brochure is designed to help residents and others understand the purposes of our organisation and its work and what helpful support can be given. The brochure includes a map of the area, and suggestions for how locals and visitors can minimise the 'human footprint'. We're very pleased to be in the process of printing the brochure and look forward to distributing it shortly, with copies also to be available at the Store in early 2015. It's really something to look forward to as will be our forthcoming website.

New State Labour Government for Victoria and Port of Hastings development

As noted in recent newsletters, SCA has been fighting the proposal for a container port at Hastings put by the Naphthine Government (including \$100 million of tax payer funded activities already committed!). There is now a new Labor Government in Victoria and Luke Donnellan has been announced as the Minister for Ports. With much debate over the location of a new container port at either Hastings or BayWest, Labor has stated it favours the BayWest option between Werribee and Geelong.

SCA still questions whether Victoria needs a new container port at all. We believe there is still capacity at Port of Melbourne. We have already made contact with Greens leader, Greg Barber and will be contacting the new Minister to learn more about the State Government's plans. Look for a further report in the newsletter in the New Year.

Issues for 2015

In our next issue, we'll be providing an overview of SCA's key campaigns for 2015. Weed removal, replanting and foreshore management and improvement, together with removal and prevention of marine debris are two of our key issues for next year. As always, we cannot achieve success without the help of members and friends. I would like to thank everyone for their efforts this year including the wonderful committee of SCA.

M A Johnston

Hooded Plovers Update

So far this season there have been eleven nests recorded around the island. Currently there are two chicks at Elizabeth Cove and three chicks at Anchorage Rd, Ventnor. There active nests at Surfies Point, Ventnor West and our own beach, Silverleaves. You can help the Hoodies by:

- Abiding by dog regulations (no dogs past the last east access track)
- Please keep clear of signed and fenced nesting areas.
- Report any nests to PINP 5951 2800

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 Silverleaves beach:

1 December to 30 April-

On leash only during restricted hours

7.00am – 10.00am and 5.00pm – 8.00 pm

No dogs anytime past the last access track at the east end of Silverleaves Ave.

Fire safety at Silverleaves

Silverleaves is rated as an EXTREME bushfire risk area. Bushfire activity can also occur outside the Silverleaves area and can move quickly, come from many directions and be unpredictable.

Residents and visitors must be prepared and have a bushfire plan, especially for days when the fire rating is severe, extreme or Code Red. Leaving early is always the safest option.

Due to the road network Silverleaves access is limited. Roads may become blocked and visibility poor due to smoke. Power may be out, communications limited and you may not receive an official warning about fire in the area.

There is no Community Fire Refuge in Silverleaves, however there is a Neighbourhood Safer Place at Cowes Recreation Reserve, 10-14 Church St, Cowes. As a last resort, go to the Silverleaves beach if safe to do so.

You need to know:

Where you will go ahead of time

How you will get there

When you will leave

What you will take with you

Be prepared. Reduce your bushfire risk and prepare your house and property for the impact of burning embers and radiant heat. Be aware of the regulations about removing vegetation without a permit, for more details contact the Bass Coast Shire 1300 226 278, www.basscoast.vic.gov.au Visit the CFA website at cfa.vic.gov.au or ring 1800 240 667 for more information on how to prepare for the bushfire season. If you see a fire in the area, call 000.

Beach Fires

There have been a number of fires on the beach during the year and are of grave concern as embers travel and can start a fire in the foreshore. If you see a fire on the beach ring 000, they will then notify the Cowes Police.

Silverleaves Beach over summer.



Soldier Crabs

Have you ever wondered why the massive groups of soldier crabs seem to emerge from nowhere all at the same time? It is thought their spontaneous arrival is triggered by the falling tide. If disturbed, they burrow into the sand with a corkscrew motion, disappearing as quickly as they arrived and leave behind little mounds of sand. As the Soldier crabs march around feeding, they mould the sand into numerous pellets, sorting through it for organic matter.



Horseshoe Jelly

The clear kidney shaped jellies on the beach commonly known as Horseshoe Jellies are the egg sacs from Sand Snails. They usually appear on the beach in October when the water warms up. Sand Snails plough their way through the sand just below the surface and make those squiggly patterns in the sand.

Don't throw it away!

Marine debris and its effects on marine life

Marine debris is one of the worst forms of marine pollution and causes shocking death of marine life. Often this can involve terrible suffering through strangulation, but also ongoing distress seen in birds ingesting small amounts of plastic over time and slowly dying, sharks trapped in drift nets, turtles ingesting plastic and crabs tangled and snared in line. These deaths are preventable if only humans weren't so careless and didn't have a human footprint that stamps on other species.

'If one stops to think of it, except for the small amount of plastics incinerated, every little bit of plastic manufactured in the world for the last 50 years or so, still remains in the environment somewhere. It's either in the landfill or it's somewhere in the ocean...'

In June 2009, the Australian Government made the *Threat Abatement Plan for the Impacts of Marine Debris on Vertebrate Marine Life* (the Plan). It noted: "Marine species can confuse plastics including bags, rubber, balloons and confectionery wrappers with prey and swallow them. This debris can cause a blockage in the digestive system. Turtles are known to eat plastic bags, confusing them with jellyfish, their common prey. Sea birds eat polystyrene balls and plastic buoys, confusing them with fish eggs and crustaceans, and whales are also known to eat plastic debris."

But more needs to be done as anyone who has walked along Silverleaves beach and seen the bits of plastic, thongs, toothbrushes, plastic bags, hair bands, toys and so many other careless discards will know.

What Can We Do?

There are lots of ways you can make a contribution to reducing marine debris:

- Carry a bag with you on the beach and pick up rubbish to dispose off in your green bin at home. Even one piece picked up can prevent a painful death.
- Participate in cleanup activities and contribute to our collective understanding of this issue by assisting organisations undertaking activities such as coastal clean ups and surveys that record marine debris.
- Don't consume plastic and consume wisely. This can help to reduce demand for materials that are possible sources of marine debris.

Letter from David Martin, Bass Coast Shire Council's Natural Resources Officer

Over the past few years SCA and Council have been focussing on the removal of Mirrorbush (*Coprosma repens*) from the Silverleaves foreshore. Efforts have been successful, with a large area of the weed removed in the foreshore behind properties on Woodland Avenue. In 2015 we plan to undertake more removal of Mirrorbush from the area closer to Coghlan Road track.

Council initially undertook removal of this weed species in 2012 in an effort to reduce fuel loads in this area. The SCA was able to get grant money to continue the removal and careful revegetation. Special care has been used in selecting the indigenous species planted in this area of foreshore, using the Banksia Woodland EVC as a guide.

SCA has also seen this work as an opportunity to lobby for the removal of Mirrorbush on private property throughout Silverleaves with good results so far. Bass Coast Shire Council would like to acknowledge the efforts of this program. We are fully supportive of SCA in continuing with this program and look forward to seeing the results of the hard work in the future.

If residents and landowners require assistance in what plants to replace the Mirrorbush with, then please feel welcome to contact David Martin, Bass Coast Shire Council's Natural Resources Officer on 1300 BCOAST (226 278).

Weed of the month Agapanthus.

Agapanthus is seen in many gardens in Silverleaves as its tough and has pretty blue flowers. Unfortunately the seed is spread by birds, wind and humans and can easily jump fences into the foreshore and Observation Point. Digging it out by the roots is the most effective way to control it. Hard work but easily done if you do it over time, a clump at a time and dispose of in general rubbish. If you leave them on the ground they will continue to grow. The next best thing is to pull off flower heads before the seeds can spread.

Consider replacing with the indigenous *Lomandra Longifolia*, Spiny-headed Mat-rush, a tough alternative that grows well in the sandy soil at Silverleaves and looks great.

Spraying weeds?

Often, it seems easy to purchase a product that claims to kill a weed, and use it, without thinking about the effects on the environment – not just on humans and pets, but on insects, birds, other wildlife and plants. There are natural alternatives to remove problem weeds in gardens and here are some suggestions;

A good time to use manual methods is after rain when the ground is soft and picking a good time to plant in competition such as in early autumn.

Pour boiling water on them – leftover boiling water from the jug or stove or leftover pasta water poured on weeds will kill a plant in a few days.

Cover them up – covering grasses, clovers and other weeds with newspapers – even better to place mulch on top of the newspapers.

Pour or spray vinegar on them – this is effective for long tap root plants such as dandelions and plantains. Note it's nonselective, not caring whether it kills weeds or other plants you may not want to treat. But it is eco-friendly and won't harm people, pets or the environment. You need to keep at it as it does not leave a residue and weeds can return.

Dig them up – even with stubborn weeds such as Bridal Creeper, once you have dug under the root system and got it out, it often does not return especially if you have replanted. The elbow grease is worth the effort!

Bring in competition – crowding out weeds by planting native ground covers such as button plant and correas are very effective.

If you find any Mirror Bush, 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 silverleavesconservation@outlook.com

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

NEXT S.C.A. MEETING

- 11.00am Sunday 25 January 2015
- Silverleaves Store

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

SCA Membership

Memberships are due for 2015 and are for the calendar year. It's only \$10.00 and includes four issues of the SCA newsletter, which is also available by email. Donations are very welcome and help us complete valuable weed clearing and revegetation projects amongst other activities. 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.

New SCA Email address
silverleavesconservation@outlook.com

SCA Diary 2015

Nature Walk with Jarvis Western, Ranger in Charge, Phillip Island Nature Park
10.00am Saturday 10 January 2015
Meet at the far eastern end of Silverleaves Ave

SCA Committee Meeting 2015
11.00am Sunday 25 January
Silverleaves General Store
BBQ 6.00pm 44 Bruce Rd at the Trayfords

SCA AGM 2015
11.00am Sunday 8 March
Silverleaves Reserve

SCA Plant Stall
9.00 – 12.00pm Saturday 7 March (Labour Day weekend) at the Silverleaves Store

