

SILVERLEAVES CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION INC.

Reg.no 0015325J

NEWSLETTER

June 2014



President's Report

Save Western Port – Oppose the proposed Port of Hastings Development NOW.
I am writing to all our members, residents and associates to ask them to *please take action to save our Bay from destruction.*

Western Port is a shallow and fragile marine environment. Not only home to a wide variety of bird and marine life, it is also a key fishery and tourism destination. The future of the entire bay and its ecosystems is now being put at risk by plans to develop the Port of Hastings. This major threat comes from the Victorian State Government's proposal to develop the Port of Hastings into a 'Shanghai-style' container port. On Phillip Island and French Island, at towns around Westernport, and along the Mornington Peninsula, there is a rising tide of opposition to the State Government's Port of Hastings proposal. As Victorian National Parks Association rightly summarised: 'The Victorian Government wants to build a gigantic port at Hastings that will involve massive dredging and construction, and see shipping through this environmentally sensitive area increase from around 100 ships a year to some 3000. That's a bit like turning a neighbourhood street into a freeway for giant container ships.'

Join with me in writing today. I will be mailing letters myself in the coming weeks. We can make a difference if we act now – particularly as the Victorian State Election approaches.

Make Your Voice Heard – Write to your Government representatives today and let them know Western Port must be protected from development at all costs.

To assist writers, we have compiled Key Points for Objectors to the proposed Port of Hastings development into a major container port by 2020.

NO VOTE FOR PORT OF HASTINGS. PLEASE WRITE TO THE FOLLOWING POLITICIANS and tell them you strongly oppose the Port of Hastings development and will not vote for a Government that supports this development.

Tell them we cannot:

- Risk the destruction of Western Port's fragile marine environment by dredging the Bay.
- Threaten Phillip Island's multimillion-dollar tourism industry notably the Penguin Parade with the potential of an oil spill.
- Put already stressed wildlife under the greater pressure this development would bring.
- Allow health-threatening emissions from the estimated 3000 contained ship visits planned for an extended port.
- Destroy the unique natural assets of Phillip and French Islands or risk sea-level rises on the Westernport coastline the dredging would bring.

Add your own words and thoughts to reinforce the message PERSONALLY to;

The Hon Denis Naphine, Premier of Victoria at Level 1 Treasury Place Melbourne VIC 3002 or denis.naphine@parliament.vic.gov.au.

The Hon Ryan Smith, Minister for Environment and Climate Change L17 8 Nicholson Street East Melbourne VIC 3002 ryan.smith@parliament.vic.gov.au

ALSO write to the **Leader of the Victorian Opposition, Daniel Andrews.**

Tell Mr Andrew you recognise his stated intention to not proceed with Port of Hastings development if elected in November 2014. 'Opposition Leader Daniel Andrews said Labor supported a second container port in the Bay West area as the best option to ensure economic growth and jobs into the future especially for Geelong and western Melbourne.' – Vic Govt media release November 2012

517A Princes Highway, Noble Park daniel.andrews@parliament.vic.gov.au

Don't forget to write to Greg Hunt Federal Environment Minister, who is also our neighbour in Flinders: 'My community is the seat of Flinders. It comprises Western Port and the Mornington Peninsula. It is where I was born, it is where I was raised and it is where I have returned.' Mr Hunt was once committed to protecting our environment. As Federal Minister he now seems to be giving tacit support to the Port development. Write to Mr Hunt and ask him to stop the plan to cede environmental protection to the States and, as Federal Environment Minister, fulfil his duty to protect international migratory birds who travel thousands of kilometres to Observatory Point on Phillip Island and other sites in Westernport.
The Hon Greg Hunt MP Member for Flinders
Minister for the Environment PO Box 274
Hastings Vic 3915
greg.hunt.mp@environment.gov.au

C82 Amendment News

Hello? – my house is going to be underwater according to the Bass Coast C82 proposed amendment – application of the Land Subject to Inundation Overlay – along with most of Silverleaves and Newhaven. Many of us have received the brochure from Bass Coast setting out points about C82 but still don't 'get' the effects of plan to 'introduce new planning permit requirements for earthworks, buildings and works'. We'd like to know how the environment will be managed and protected as well as what the proposed 'flood and coastal inundation information to be included on property information certificates when property changes hands.' We will be seeking more information from Council about a possible Panel Hearing for C82. Watch this space.

Plant Stall Report

On the 8 June 2014, the Sunday of Queen's Birthday weekend, SCA held a plant stall at the Silverleaves General Store. Native grasses and the local Banksia Integrifolia (Coastal Banksia) were on sale and were popular with locals and visitors alike. Committee members answered many questions about strategies for successful planting and indigenous species. We hope to hold another plant stall with a more extensive range of plants later in the year.

Thank you to Barb Martin Bushbank, Bass Coast Shire and the Silverleaves Store and to all who bought plants for supporting this important venture. Proceeds raised at the stall are being put towards SCA's foreshore weed control program.

M A Johnston
President SCA

What's been happening around Silverleaves during autumn?

Silverleaves had some unusual visitors over the autumn months which you may have heard squawking in the trees at night. They were the grey-headed flying-fox and we haven't seen them here before. These bats have the largest body size of all bats and their wingspan can reach one metre and can weigh up to one kilogram. There are colonies in Geelong and Gippsland and these bats are capable of nightly flights of up to 50 km from their roost to different feeding areas. They were most likely attracted to the Banksia blooms. Silverleaves is also the home of Micro Bats.



You may have mistaken the micro-bats for large moths or small birds; they can be seen around dusk or later in the night zigzagging around catching insects. Although the size of a little mouse each of these tiny bats can munch through three-quarters of its body weight in insects a night. Thus, they play a really important role in keeping our bug populations in check. Let's hope they enjoy the Silverleaves mosquitoes and sandflies!

By day, micro-bats roost in colonies of 20–50 animals in tree hollows or roof cavities. All Bats are placental mammals. Other Australian native placental mammals are rodents, seals, dingos, dolphins and whales; all other native mammals are marsupials. Females give birth to a single young in spring and feed them with milk for 6–7 weeks. In winter, micro-bats become inactive to save energy and their temperature can drop to near-freezing and their heart rate slows down.

Micro-bats emit rapid pulses of ultrasound and detect prey by the way the sound bounces back to them. They are highly vulnerable to changes in their environment. Because tree hollows are critical to these bats for breeding and roosting, they have declined in areas that have been developed. Competition with the introduced Indian Myna bird for tree hollows increases the problem. Micro-bats are another reason to preserve our precious native trees, especially banksias as this is their home as well as ours.

Hooded Plovers update

Eight Hooded Plovers successfully fledged from Phillip Island last season, with one of these fledglings coming from Silverleaves east. The Hooded Plover population on the island continues to grow, and this is one of the very few places in Australia to see this growth. However, we all need to ensure we don't become complacent, and keep our dogs and ourselves away from Hooded Plover breeding areas as signed, and keep on top of weeds such as Sea Spurge.

Ethel Temby Memorial

A plaque and timber park seat will soon be installed in the Silverleaves Reserve, and a Banksia tree will be planted, as a memorial to Ethel and Allan Temby, long-term residents of Silverleaves and conservationists. An unveiling ceremony will occur Sunday 21 September at 11.00 am before the next SCA meeting. Thank you to the Bass Coast Shire Council for all their support and for funding the project.

Grant to protect Silverleaves

The SCA was recently successful in applying for a grant to 'Protect and enhance Coast Banksia Woodland and Hooded Plover habitat at Silverleaves' through the Communities for Nature Program 2013/14. This Grant will supply funding of nearly \$10,000 for woody weed control, spraying of weeds such as English and Cape Ivy and Bridal Creeper, and for revegetation along the foreshore reserve.

SCA will work with the Bass Coast Shire Council to appoint contractors to control the weeds, and will conduct working bees to complete the revegetation component of the grant over the coming winter months. The entire grant project is to be completed by June 2016.

SCA Calendar 2015

The SCA Committee is planning to print a Silverleaves calendar for 2015 as a fundraiser. We have received some lovely photos of the Silverleaves beach, sunsets and wildlife and welcome your contribution. Send us your favourite photo and if selected you could have your photo included. There are only twelve months to a year so only the best twelve photos will be selected.

Send your photo as a JPG to the newsletter editor myra.holmes.000@gmail.com with your contact details.

Weed of the month



Sweet Pittosporum (*Pittosporum undulatum*)

This native tree occurs naturally through much of Gippsland but has become an invasive and environmental weed as its dense foliage reduces light levels which effects the composition of ground flora and leaf litter and altering soil chemistry.

It has masses of sweet-scented flowers in spring which develop into orange berries in autumn. Dispersal has become more widespread due to altered drainage patterns, reduced fire frequencies, increased dispersal by birds and its popularity as a garden plant.

Control Measures: Cut down large trees and dispose of in green waste and pull up small seedlings when you see them.

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 or email jarvis-kara@bigpond.com

Weed Spraying tips

SCA highlights the importance of using manual labour techniques for weed control or non-chemical treatments wherever possible.

Reminder – DO NOT USE chemicals near drainage lines or streams. The effects on aquatic life can be devastating even in minute amounts. Always seek expert advice. Alternative weed control methods include:

Cut & Paint - Suitable for many woody weeds and some climbing creepers. The plant is cut off close to the ground and herbicide applied immediately to the cut surface. A staggered pruning technique may be used for larger trees with herbicide applied at the last cut.

SCA Diary for 2014

Next SCA meeting

- Sunday 21 September 2014
- 12.00pm
- Silverleaves Store

Unveiling Ceremony

- Temby Memorial
- Sunday 21 September 2014
- 11.00am at the Silverleaves Reserve

Please come to the meeting and hear more about SCA plans, propose ideas, and meet other residents of Silverleaves. SCA is a community group and we welcome newcomers and residents alike. We look forward to seeing you then.

Drill & Frill - Chips or frills are made into the trunk of a woody weed close to the base of the trunk with an axe or tomahawk with herbicide applied immediately. Cuts to penetrate through the hard outer bark and just into the soft bark. Alternately, an angled hole can be drilled into the sapwood just below the bark and herbicide applied immediately. Refer to the chemical label.

Scrape & Paint - A variation of cut and paint that is more appropriate for treating large woody, vine-like weeds. The outside bark of a vine is removed with a knife and the exposed inner tissue immediately painted with herbicide.

Foliar Spray - An appropriate herbicide is applied as fine droplets to the surface of foliage using a knapsack or spray unit.

Always use weed sprays with extreme care, wear gloves and eye protection and only use if absolutely necessary.

Source: The Common Weeds of Gippsland, Bass Coast Shire Council
www.basscoast.vic.gov.au/.../CommonWeedsBassCoast_forweb.pdf

Apology An apology for those who may not have been receiving the SCA newsletter. Please remember to send a new membership form when you renew your membership so we can keep our mailing list up-to-date, especially those who renew online.

RENEW YOUR SCA MEMBERSHIP

It's only \$10.00 per calendar year and includes four issues of the SCA newsletter by mail or email. Donations are very welcome and thank you to those members who have recently made donations when renewing their membership. Every dollar counts as it helps 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.



Banksia integrifolia

Why is 'Silverleaves' known by this name?

We are surrounded by the only large remnant population left on the Island of the magnificent Banksia Integrifolia trees. The back of the leaf is a silvery colour and hence its name. The trees grow up to 35 metres (110 ft) and we believe some of the big banksias are up to 100 years old. Flowers are produced all through the year but there is a strong peak in autumn. Little else flowers within its range at this time, so it is a seasonally important source of food for a range of animals feeding on the species, including a wide range of insects and nectariferous animals such as the New Holland Honeyeater, Wattlebirds, Rainbow Lorikeet, possums and bats.

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

