

SILVERLEAVES CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION INC.

Reg.no 0015325J

NEWSLETTER

September 2016



News Update

Coastal erosion from wind and tides has worsened on our beautiful beach. The East Cowes Foreshore Group is working hard to promote the importance of more effective management of these issues. In other news, it is encouraging to be able to report some positive outcomes for the Rhyll Inlet.

Brighter Outlook for Rhyll Inlet - Bass Coast Shire Council Amendment C140 – Rural Land Use Strategy Implementation Panel Report

SCA committed to its 'Save the Rhyll Inlet' Campaign back in late 2012. Now there is real progress towards better protection seen in Amendment C140.

This applies to all Farming Zoned and Rural Activity Zoned land within Bass Coast Shire. In addition it also applies to four specific sites one of which is the land west of the Rhyll Wetland.

Council invited submissions on the proposal to rezone this parcel of land from Farming Zone to Rural Conservation Zone and apply the Environmental Significance Overlay.

This included modifying the Municipal Strategic Statement to implement the recommendations of the *Bass Coast Rural Land Use Strategy (2013)* and the *Bass Coast Shire Review of Rhyll Wetland (2015)*.

SCA made a submission supporting the strengthening of protection for the Rhyll Inlet via a Rural Conservation Zone overlay.

According to Council's Panel Report of 14 June 2016, two objections from two Rhyll Inlet land owners were received.

Submitter 24 expressed concern that the overlay would limit the use of farming land.

The Council's submission explains that the Rural Conservation Zone is by nature more restrictive than the currently applied Farm Zone and the Review of the Rhyll Wetland justifies this rezoning as follows:

'The land provides a buffer between Cowes and the Rhyll Inlet, contains saltmarsh vegetation that is potential habitat for critically endangered birds, is located within the Westernport Ramsar site and has high environmental value. The Review also notes that the Land Subject to Inundation Overlay, proposed via Amendment C82, as approved by Council and currently with the Planning Minister for approval, covers most of the rezone area.'

In its conclusion, the Panel agreed that:

'on balance it supports the application of the Rural Conservation Zone and the Environmental Significance Overlay (Schedule 1) to submitter 24's land.

The Panel however considers it appropriate to further consider the merits of incorporating the environmentally significant proportion of the land into the Rhyll Wetland via reaching a pragmatic, equitable and balanced outcome via negotiation with the State Government.

In reaching this finding the Panel acknowledges that there appears to be a portion of the land that may be suitable for the construction of a dwelling above the floodplain. The Panel supports the application of the Rural Conservation Zone and the Environmental Significance Overlay (Schedule 1) to submitter 46's land.

The Panel acknowledges advice that the land owner is in discussions with the State Government regarding the possible transfer of the environmentally significant proportion of the land into the Rhyll Wetland.'

DO YOU HAVE AN EMAIL ADDRESS?

A significant proportion of SCA's budget is allocated to mailing costs.

We're encouraging everyone to receive the newsletter by email.

Please email the secretary & newsletter editor with your email address on:

silverleavesconservation@outlook.com

silverleavesnewsletter@outlook.com

The new SCA website for SCA is live and you can look for the group on Facebook!

SCA Honorary Life Membership Awards

Following the recent award made to Gwen Holmes, several of our other SCA members have also been awarded Honorary Lifetime Membership of the Silverleaves Conservation Association, in recognition of their wonderful service to the environment and conservation.

Veronica and Ros Trayford have helped produce and distribute the newsletter, attended many meetings and assisted with vital conservation work, as well as serving on the SCA Committee.

Don Cox, our Honorary Treasurer and Committee Member, has spent many years assisting with the SCA AGM and plant stalls and monitoring inappropriate development, and sharing his outstanding knowledge of local plants and wildlife. Don has also committed many hours to weed clearing and replanting.

All three are long-time beach house owners and resident and have worked tirelessly over many years to protect and enhance the Silverleaves natural environment.

We thank them for their great work and commitment.

Winter at Silverleaves

Winter has been wet and windy this year, and strong north winds and storms have caused further erosion to the foreshore, particularly the west end near Cowes. Did you know in the 1960's a number of wooden groynes were built at both ends of Silverleaves Beach? They have been so successful they are now completely covered by sand.

As well, in the past many foreshore residents tried to reduce erosion with rough barriers made of fallen branches.



Groynes at the far east end of Silverleaves in the mid 1970's

SCA Plant Stall - Queens Birthday Weekend 2016

We held another very successful plant stall at the Silverleaves Store. Plants were donated by the Barb Martin Bushbank to help raise funds for Silverleaves weed control and replanting programs.

More than \$200.00 was raised and a number of new members signed up to SCA. Plant stalls are a great opportunity for SCA Committee members to be able to meet interested locals and visitors and to share knowledge of indigenous plants and their importance. We encourage everyone to 'go native' in their gardens – planting indigenous plants and also keeping clearing of indigenous trees and vegetation to a minimum.

Both these measures help protect wildlife by providing provide a vital habitat for birds and insects, and protect the vegetation understorey.



SCA Committee members ask you to please consider 'going native' and plant indigenous plants in your Silverleaves garden

New Bass Coast Shire Cat Control Laws

Council has resolved to implement a cat curfew and compulsory desexing of cats from April next year. Significant communication and education campaigns will be conducted by the Council in the coming months to ensure the public is fully aware of the changes and that everyone has all the information they need to comply with the new laws.

Cats are beautiful creatures but unfortunately even the loveliest of them can have a terrible impact on native fauna, particularly birds and the smaller animals and reptiles.

SUPPORT SCA- join or renew membership

We rely on donations and subscription renewals to carry out the important work protecting the precious environment of Silverleaves.

Please be sure to renew your subscription annually, and donations are always welcome.

Details are on the backpage of this newsletter

Working Bees We had a great working bee in June with seven fantastic hard-working volunteers putting in 200 plants along the foreshore east of Ellen Rd with a follow up working bee in August where we planted another 162 indigenous plants and trees. We have now conducted significant weed control and revegetation along the foreshore reserve from Coghlan Rd access track to Sanders Rd access track.

SCA holds regular Working Bees and everyone is welcome. You don't have to be an SCA member. Tools, gloves and safety gear are provided. The work includes removing invasive weeds and revegetating areas with indigenous plants. Please consider coming along – it's a couple of hours out in the fresh air and you will be doing your bit to preserve the unique Silverleaves area for the future. Plus it's a great way to meet your neighbours and be part of the community.

The next working be will be held on **Sunday 11th September** and will focus on removal of the Sweet Pittosporum (*Pittosporum undulatum*).

You can also contact the SCA for more information silverleavesconservation@outlook.com

Wallaby research

You may have noticed more wallabies in the Silverleaves area in recent times. It seems likely that the population is increasing, and with the human population also increasing, interaction is inevitable, which isn't always positive. The Phillip Island Nature Park is researching wallabies on the island to better understand their movement patterns, preferred habitats, the plants they like to eat and also the perception of wallabies by the public and landowners. The research findings will be used to guide future management of the species, managed by the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP). Wallabies are a native wildlife species and therefore protected, please respect these wonderful animals and try not to disturb them and don't allow dogs or children to chase them.

The Winter Whale season

Whale watchers have recorded a busy season in Western Port and Port Phillip. The number of whales spotted off our coastline is increasing annually, with an estimated 30 percent increase in sightings from 10 years ago. There have been 83 whale sightings between June 2 and the beginning of August this year, including humpback whales, southern right whales & Orcas. Two humpback whales were even seen last year from Silverleaves Beach, happily playing in the channel, so keep your eyes open.

The Two Bays Whale Project is a citizen science project for the public to report whale sightings in both Westernport and Port Phillip Bays, and to contribute images to a centralised database. The Project is run by the Dolphin Research Institute and Wildlife Coast Cruises. The data is used to compare sighting rates, monitor changes in behaviour and give an overall understanding of trends in numbers of visiting animals. Whale sightings can be reported on their Facebook page www.facebook.com/twobayswhales or telephone 0487 745 066.

Possums of Phillip Island – Meet our Brush Tailed friends

Phillip Island is home to two marsupial possums - the common brush tailed possum and the ring tailed possum. They are protected in Australia and on the Island. The **common brush tailed possum** has thick dark brown or grey fur, orange tummy, pointy pink nose, and long whiskers, a black tail, with leather-like strap underneath, helps grip branches. It is nocturnal and lives to about 13 years of age in the wild.

The brush tail possum is very territorial and marks its territory with a secretion from a gland in its chest (as do koalas). If relocated, it generally does not survive. To communicate it makes a low throaty chattering noise. Breeding can occur any time of the year but peaks in spring and the gestation period is about 17 days, with only one young. As with all marsupials, the young climbs through the mother's fur up into her pouch and attaches to a teat. The young remains in the pouch up to 6 months, and then rides on the mother's back for about nine months.

They live in hollows in trees and, much to the chagrin of homeowners, they also inhabit roof cavities. Brush tail predators include humans, dogs, the introduced fox, plus cars. Let's not take on the predator role! If a possum does enter your roof, it can be safely removed by a wildlife expert and housed in a purpose made possum box in a tree in your garden.

The brush-tailed possum is a herbivore, eating eucalypt leaves but also flowers, seeds and fruits. Yes they can eat your plants but they are also protected wildlife – and were here long before European settlement came to Phillip Island – so let's look after them and appreciate them.

Nesting shorebirds already!

It is hard to believe but the breeding season for some shorebirds is about to begin.

Species such as Red-capped Plovers and Hooded Plovers, found along Silverleaves Beach, have already begun their breeding seasons.

Both these species form nests above the high tide on the beach on in the foredune. The nests are little more than slight depressions in the ground and are very exposed. Both have low breeding success due to disturbance, dogs and predation.

If you spot a nest please report it to the **Nature Park 5951 2800 or Bass Coast Shire Council 1300 226 278.**

Please help these vulnerable birds by staying away from fenced nesting areas, keeping dogs out of prohibited areas and on the lead in other areas, and picking up rubbish.

Weed of the Month



Image: www.agric.wa.gov.au

Boneseed *Chrysanthemoides monilifera*

Boneseed is a weed of national significance. It is regarded as one of the worst weeds in Australia because of its invasiveness, potential for spread, and economic and environmental impacts. Originally from South Africa, it is perennial shrub to 3 m high with dull green paddle shaped leaves and young leaves often covered in cottony down. It has bright yellow daisy flowers from winter to summer, and green berries in summer which turn into hard black seeds. A heavy seeder, the seeds are spread by birds, animals and water.

Removal is by cutting the plant at the base of the stem and applying herbicide to the cut stump immediately (cut and paint method). The removed plant should be disposed of as rubbish, being careful not to spread seed. Herbicide can also be used to spray the plants by professionals.

 Like us on Facebook Silverleaves Conservation Association has a Facebook page – please take a look. You can add a photo, leave a comment, and find out what's going on. We plan to add links to newsletters and other articles of interest in the future.
<https://www.facebook.com/silverleavesca>
The SCA website is now live!

SCA MEETINGS

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

Saturday 10 September 2016
3.00 pm, Silverleaves Store

Sunday 20 November 2016
11.00am, Silverleaves Store

Sunday 15 January 2017
2.00pm, Silverleaves Reserve

SILVERLEAVES NATURE WALK

Sunday, January 15th 2017, 10am -12 pm

Meet at the east end of Silverleaves Ave.

Put the date in your calendars now!

The SCA Annual Nature ramble is led by Jarvis Weston, Ranger in Charge, Phillip Island Nature Parks and is a fabulous opportunity to learn more about the Silverleaves foreshore. The walk is particularly aimed at children but has something for everyone.

No bookings required and it's FREE.

SUPPORT THE SCA – JOIN OR RENEW NOW!

SCA relies on membership subscriptions and generous donations from local residents and associates to continue its vital work.

Donations are very welcome and help us complete valuable weed clearing and revegetation projects amongst other activities.

Have you renewed your 2016 membership?

To ensure this work can continue and we encourage you to renew your membership for 2016 if you haven't already done so.

Of course you are able to renew anytime during the year and we are happy to accept renewal for multiple years in advance.

It's only \$10.00 per year and includes four issues of the SCA newsletter.

Due to rising costs of postage we encourage you to receive the newsletter by email.

If you don't already receive the newsletter by email please notify the Secretary & newsletter editor at the below email addresses of your email address.

Complete the membership form and send with your cheque to:

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

Or return your form by email and make a direct deposit online:

Bendigo Bank
BSB 633 000 Account 132 984 592
including your surname for reference.

For membership forms and any other queries:

silverleavesconservation@outlook.com

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