

SILVERLEAVES CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION INC.

Reg.no 0015325J

NEWSLETTER

June 2017



News Report

The SCA held its Annual General Meeting on a sunny morning at the Silverleaves Reserve on Sunday 12 March 2017. We were delighted to welcome the new Mayor of Bass Coast Shire, Councillor Pamela Rothfield. Our Mayor spoke in a very supportive way about the SCA efforts and congratulated the SCA for its dedication and commitment to conserving and preserving the Silverleaves area. This included noting the efforts to save the Rhyll Inlet from development. All residents were urged to get on board to support their endeavours.

Our SCA President gave an annual report of what has been achieved in the past twelve months – and it covered some great wins including weed removal and replanting on the Silverleaves Foreshore. Acknowledgment was given to SCA Committee Members and others who support the SCA and have tirelessly and willingly given their time and energy to help preserve this beautiful area we love so much. We also welcomed new Committee members and gratefully acknowledge further interest in and support for SCA's work.

There are many challenges still facing Silverleaves including protecting Observation Point, the Rhyll Inlet which is a RAMSAR site and the area's unique environment with its native flora and fauna. Members of the SCA have been working hard to mitigate threats to Silverleaves such as the effects of climate change and coastal erosion, marine pollution and, on a very local front, the destruction of native vegetation to build large scale dwellings.

Key SCA Campaigns

At the March AGM, key campaigns for 2017 were flagged including:

SCAID - Silverleaves Conservation Association Against Inappropriate Development -The aim of this campaign is to raise awareness and monitor inappropriate development, and fight to preserve the natural environment and native vegetation from the threat of boundary to boundary new large dwellings with suburban style landscaping.

Shorebird Protection and Wildlife Management - CA noted the worrying decline in shorebirds on Western Port and the need to ramp up protection of Hooded Plovers and other birds. This included better management of waste to prevent plastics and other pollutants ever reaching the sea – a mammoth task given the amount of packaging waste people unthinkingly generate.

Vegetation Management Campaign-This campaign focuses on weed control and revegetation and has been very successful with regular working bees in the foreshore as well as obtaining grants to finance larger scale operations, such as the work done in the Woodlands foreshore removing Mirror Bush, Sea Spurge and Polygala and revegetation with indigenous plants.

Rhyll Inlet Protection Campaign-The task of saving Rhyll Inlet is ongoing and include meeting with Trust for Nature, Phillip Island Nature Park and Bass Coast Shire. Land adjoining Rhyll Inlet is now part of the Bass Coast Shires new Rural Conservation Zone under Amendment C140 and also has an Environmental Significance Overlay over it. The ultimate goal is that all environmentally significant areas bordering Rhyll Inlet are protected in perpetuity.



SCA Secretary Jarvis Weston, Mayor Pamela Rothfield, SCA President Marjorie Johnston at the SCA AGM March 2017

Anyone who is interested in helping out with any of these campaigns, please contact SCA by email

silverleavesconservation@outlook.com.

As we all know, the Silverleaves area is beautiful and precious and vulnerable, so any and all assistance is very welcome.

The full report from our recent AGM is available on the SCA website,
<http://www.silverleavesca.org>

News Updates

Victorian Government Coastcare Community Grant. The Grant Application is directed at removing pines trees and weeds along the Silverleaves foreshore, continuing to revegetate the foreshore, and with Hooded Plover monitoring and protection, and for an interpretational sign. In total, we have applied for \$7,390 with the application endorsed by Bass Coast Shire Council. We will know if we have been successful in the next few months.

New Membership of Small Township Coastal Alliance

The SCA has officially joined the Small Coastal Township Alliance to work towards greater controls under the Design and Development Overlay to protect against inappropriate development. The approach is to group with other likeminded communities to strive for greater environmental protections.

Meet the Spotted Pardalote



Image: www.birding.about.com

Has anyone spied one of these beautiful little birds recently at Silverleaves? The Spotted Pardalote is a tiny bird 8 cm to 10 cm high. The wings, tail and head of the male are black and covered with small, distinct white spots. Males have a pale eyebrow, a yellow throat and a red rump. Females are similar but have less distinct markings. They make a repeated three-note whistle, the second two notes higher than the first.

Vale John Clarke – SCA Pays Tribute

29 July 1948 – 9 April 2017

Satirist, comedian and environmentalist John Clarke died in April in a tragic loss to his family, friends and the broader community. John was a Silverleaves resident of many years, a keen conservationist and bird observer, and a lover and owner of conservation land at Rhyll.

As an avid bird watcher John and his 35mm telephoto lensed camera were a familiar sight around Silverleaves especially on the Rhyll Inlet where he sought the perfect bird picture.

Our SCA President recalls a recent visit by John and his wife Helen to her house in Bruce Road which backs onto the Rhyll Inlet. John and Helen were delighted to be able to see the way the land flowed from the house block into the wetland right off the back boundary and enjoyed seeing birds and wildlife as well as discuss conservation issues over a cup of tea during their visit.

John was a quiet achiever whose environmental protection efforts extended widely to include producing an excellent video about the need to protect sea grass and mangrove assets in Western Port – funded through his own personal efforts. He was a founding member of Westernport Sea Grass Partnership

The list of his other contributions to the environment – and the broader community – is very long with many proud achievements. John was a very modest man and we would like to acknowledge his fighting spirit and inspirational conservation efforts.

John's hope was that all of Western Port and Phillip Island would ultimately be protected for its unique environmental qualities including flora and fauna. He often highlighted the fact that Western Port Bay is unique in the world in being a natural Bay adjacent to a very large city, Melbourne.

SCA would like to extend their sympathies to the family and friends of John Clarke. John's humour, intelligence and commitment to Phillip Island will be greatly missed. His passing leaves an enormous gap; SCA has plans to develop a tribute to John Clarke to recognise his tireless conservation efforts over many years.

Heads Up on our next Plant Stall

SCA will hold its second Plant Stall for this year in Spring. We will be selling Indigenous plants suitable for Silverleaves, from tube stocks to mature plants ranging in cost \$3-\$10.

- **Sunday 24 September 2017**
- **10 am – 2 pm**
- **Silverleaves General Store**

Barb Martin Bushbank

The Bushbank supply local indigenous plants and are open Wednesdays from 9.30 am to 3.00pm and the first Saturday of the month from 10.00 to 1.00pm. The Bushbank is next to the Koala Conservation Centre and is a great place to buy plants as well as get some ideas about what might be suitable for gardens in Silverleaves and for your garden.

Preserving the foreshore

SCA is committed to keeping the foreshore clear of invasive weeds. Such weeds can out-compete our native plant communities, resulting in the reduction of plant diversity and loss of habitat for native animals. The SCA recently spent about \$1,900 on weed control along the foreshore as part of the Bass Coast Shire Community Grants, agapanthus and other weeds that were identified in one of our weed mapping working bees have been removed. We still have \$1,100 to spend of this grant.

SCA Working Bees

SCA holds regular Working Bees and welcomes you to join us. Please consider coming along to remove invasive weeds, plant indigenous plants and do your bit to preserve the unique area of Silverleaves for the future. We are currently fighting agapanthus, cacti succulents and other exotic 'escapees' in the Foreshore. All efforts to help the battle are most welcome. If you notice a large infestation contact SCA and we will organise a working bee to remove them.

Please – also remember to Plant Native in your own garden!

Working Bee Dates

- **Sunday 18 June 2017**
- **Meet at 10 am at the Silverleaves Store Planting along the foreshore**

- **Sunday 1 October 2017**
- **Meet at 10 am at the Silverleaves Store Planting along the foreshore**

Weed of The Month



Bridal Creeper

Bridal creeper emerges in autumn and winter and there is plenty of it about in Silverleaves. It is an aggressive and highly invasive weed, smothering ground flora, smaller shrubs and trees.

Summer sees the above ground growth die off, leaving the tuberous mat under the ground that will nourish the plant until the leaves reappear in the following winter. The berries are spread by birds and other animals.

Slashing the stems and leaves may prevent fruit production and slowly deplete root reserves but it will not eradicate an infestation. Physical removal is difficult unless all the rhizomes are dug up and destroyed. It's great exercise and very rewarding once Bridal Creeper is dug up completely.

<http://stca.tas.gov.au/weeds/bridal-creeper-a-weed-of-national-significance>

Domestic and Feral Cats

Bass Coast Shire have introduced a new law in April which requires cat owners to compulsory desex newly registered cats and to enforce a night time containment order for cats from sunset to sunrise. Keeping your cat contained at night will help protect the native wildlife that we so treasure, such as birds, frogs, lizards and small marsupials.

Council receives around 150 requests each year from people wanting to borrow free cat traps to deal with a nuisance cat on their property and responds to around 80 complaints in relation to stray cats at large. Feral cats are a big problem on the Island and Phillip Island Nature Parks and Parks Victoria, have been implementing feral cat eradication programs on French Island and Phillip Island.

Foreshore Grass

Have you noticed two different species of grass growing on the foreshore? One is the *Spinifex Sericeus*, commonly known as beach spinifex or coastal spinifex and is native to Australia and New Zealand. The blades are flat and silky and the star like seeds heads become tumbleweeds. It is an important pioneer species which colonises coastal dunes, binding loose sand with its horizontal runners.



Spinifex sericeus

Image <http://ausgrass2.myspecies.info/content/spinifex-sericeus>

The other type of grass is Marram Grass, which was introduced from Europe to stabilise coastal dunes. It is very effective at trapping sand and grows vigorously, thus reducing the natural changes often associated with coastal dune systems. Unfortunately, Marram Grass is able to spread rapidly and over long distances from dune stabilisation projects to invade other coastal areas



Marram Grass

Image <http://www.esc.nsw.gov.au/living-in/about/our-natural-environment/introduced-plants-and-animals/weeds>



Silverleaves Conservation Association has a Facebook page where members share photos and stories of Silverleaves. Become a part of our online community. We would love you to share your experiences of Silverleaves as well!

Please visit our wonderful new SCA webpage, which includes archived newsletters and membership forms. <http://www.silverleavesca.org>

SUPPORT THE SCA

The SCA relies on membership subscriptions and donations to continue its vital work such as valuable weed clearing in the foreshore and revegetation projects amongst other activities. Due to rising costs of mail and printing, the SCA in the future will only be able to mail newsletters to current SCA members. We encourage you to receive the newsletter by email if possible. Please let us know your email address at silverleavesconservation@outlook.com

Membership renewal is at the beginning of the calendar year and you can now renew for one, two or five years at \$20.00 per annum or \$40.00/\$100.00 respectively. Seniors and Students \$15.00 p.a. Membership includes four issues per annum of the SCA Newsletter.

Complete a 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.

Or make an online payment through the SCA Website using your credit card.

<http://www.silverleavesca.org>

Please include your name on your transfer for our records, otherwise we cannot identify payments made

To request a membership form or if you have a query about your membership contact the SCA Secretary;

silverleavesconservation@outlook.com

SCA Committee Meetings 2017

- **Saturday 10 June 2017**
- **3.00pm, Silverleaves Store**

- **Saturday 23 September**
- **3.00pm Silverleaves Store**

- **Sunday 19 November**
- **11.00am Silverleaves Reserve**

Please feel welcome to come along to the meeting and hear more about SCA plans, propose ideas, and meet other residents of Silverleaves. We'd love to see you.