

# SILVERLEAVES CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION INC.

Reg.no 0015325J

## NEWSLETTER

June 2023



### SCA COMMITTEE MEETING AGM

**Saturday 24 June at 3.00pm Koala Conservation meeting room**

Please come to the meeting and hear more about SCA plans, propose ideas, and meet other residents of Silverleaves. We are keen to hear from you about any issues or concerns regarding the Silverleaves environment and we look forward to seeing you then.

### WORKING BEE 2023

**Saturday 25 June at 11.00am- 12.00pm Meet at the Silverleaves reserve.**

BYO garden gloves and appropriate footwear. Tea and cake will be provided afterwards.

### SCA PLANT STALL



Photo Christine Irving

The SCA plant stall at the Silverleaves store in April was a great success with most of the indigenous plants and grasses going to new gardens around Silverleaves. As well as raising vital funds for our Silverleaves working bee plantings, the plant stall is important in educating people about the importance of planting natives and encouraging biodiversity.

Many thanks to Richard and Barbara Guy for their enthusiasm and hard work, organizing the event and setting up the stall and signs. And thanks to Don Cox who generously donated a variety of potted plants and other SCA members who helped out on the day.

### DISTINCTIVE AREA LANDSCAPE PROJECT

The Bass Coast Distinctive Area and Landscape (DAL) hearings have concluded and will provide an independent report to the minister of planning. This strategic plan will provide a guide for future land use.

A big thanks to SCA committee members Natalie Gray and Louise Hill who respectively wrote and presented an extensive submission on behalf of the SCA at the hearing regarding key issues relevant to the Silverleaves area. This included concerns about foreshore erosion, protecting the Rhyll Inlet, vegetation protection and maintaining the distinctive landscape of Silverleaves.

The DAL proposed to exclude from the town boundary the 20-acre property on the corner of Coghlan Road and Cowes Rhyll Road – next to the Rhyll Inlet. If this property were within the town boundary it could then be developed with housing. The SCA support this exclusion on the grounds the land is subject to flooding and is connected to the Rhyll Inlet, an internationally recognised RAMSAR wetland.

Any development on the site would involve excessive earth works and soil disturbance which will have a detrimental effect on the wetlands and waterways of the Rhyll Inlet and the marine environment due to sediment and impurities inflow into the bay.

The Silverleaves settlement, the Silverleaves beach foreshore reserve and the Rhyll Inlet are all part of a wildlife and green corridor and support a diverse species of wildlife. The Rhyll Inlet is bordered by the Conservation Hill Reserve and Oswin Roberts Reserve through to the Koala Conservation Park, as well as Swan Bay, and the Churchill Island Marine National Park. This interconnecting ecosystem is unique and fragile and SCA supports its acquisition by the state government for management by Phillip Island Nature Parks to protect this unique area for the future.

## FORESHORE EROSION



Image source Myra Holmes

The SCA has submitted two requests urging the Bass Coast Shire to devote funding in this year's budget to study the problem of foreshore erosion to provide solutions as soon as possible. Erosion had been a growing problem and has increased in the past year since the \$3.35 million, 360-metre wall metre boulder rock wall was built between Coghlan Road and Rose Avenue, along with eight timber groynes and sand works.

There was a need for council to undertake the Cowes East foreshore protection works but it appears unintended impacts have occurred as a result. The works removed tons of sand to build the wall to the extent that now you cannot access the beach from mid to high tide and between Ellen Road and Sanders Road, the erosion to the primary dune has increased significantly.

There is an urgent need to understand the coastal processes and properly plan. It should consider the impact of the work to date on erosion and sand movement and the likely impact of further erosion from increased storm activity. Possible solutions should be assessed, such as new groynes, protection of the sand dunes, or even regulation of beach access from residents through the foreshore reserve and increased surveillance of and action against vegetation removal.

## REPORT FROM THE VICTORIAN COASTAL MONITORING PROGRAM

Cowes has been given one of the highest erosion warnings for a town in a bay, in a new report from the Victorian Coastal Monitoring Program. The report says the beach face of Cowes is steepening, with "steady long-term erosion" and strong seasonal movement.

Last year preliminary results from three years of drone research in Cowes found sand is moving in an easterly direction, leaving some erosion hotspots. University of Melbourne Professor David Kennedy, Director of the Office of Environmental Programs, at the time said about 4000 cubic metres of sand had accumulated,

moving in an easterly direction and landing and extending Observation Point at the east end of Silverleaves by 1.4 metres.

At the same time there were clear hotspots of erosion, particularly where the current rock wall has been built between Rose Avenue and Coghlan Road. Professor Kennedy said "rock walls don't necessarily protect a beach but protect property boundaries and you always get an end effect with them. The general rule with a rock wall is that you double the erosion effect at the end of the wall by a few metres".

## INUNDATION OVERLAY AND RISING SEA LEVELS AFFECTING PLANNING PERMITS

The new, stricter threshold on predicted sea level rise and inundation is having an impact on new building permit applications. There have recently been a couple of applications in Silverleaves refused. The Victorian government last year amended all planning schemes to require planning for sea level rise of not less than 0.8 metres by 2100, an increase on the previous 0.2 metres by 2040. This change allows "for the combined effects of tides, storm surges, coastal processes and local conditions such as topography and geology" to be considered when assessing risks and coastal impacts associated with climate change.

The owner of a 26ha property located at the east end of Settlement Road, bordering the Rhyll Inlet and all properties along Bruce Road has had their application for an extension of time to build a house rejected by VCAT.



Image source: The Phillip Island and San Remo Advertiser 6/06/2023

This property has a long history, a planning permit was originally issued in August 2014, when the land was zoned farming. In 2016 the property had a land subject to inundation overlay applied to it, and the following year it was rezoned rural.

In 2019, the owner Carley Nicholls (who was involved in the controversial Ventnor "Cadogan" rezoning issue a decade ago) sought a planning amendment requesting approval from the Minister of Planning, because the land was zoned environmentally sensitive and flood prone.

While shire planners recommended approval of the planning permit, councillors voted against the deal, which would have seen a large portion of the land gifted to the crown in exchange for the planning permit's green light.

Much of the property has conservation status, neighbouring the Rhyll Inlet Reserve, which is RAMSAR listed and managed by Phillip Island Nature Parks.

Source The Phillip Island and San Remo Advertiser 6/06/2023

### **TREE VANDALISM**

Bass Coast Shire officers regularly monitor all foreshore reserves they manage, and any suspicious activity such as clearing vegetation to gain a view or path is investigated with methods including lab-testing leaf samples for evidence of herbicide use. They will also erect large signs to remind residents that interfering with vegetation on public land would not be tolerated.

Since European settlement, more than 85 per cent of the Shire's indigenous vegetation has been cleared. Most of what remains is in coastal reserves where it provides habitat for 153 species of plants and animals classified as under threat or endangered, and plays an important role in stabilising sand dunes, plus protecting nearby houses and roads from the elements.

Anyone with information about tree vandalism should call 1300 BCOAST (226 278).

### **NATURE STRIPS**

Bass Coast Shire are also cracking down on inappropriate planting on nature strips, such as agapanthus and other invasive weeds and overgrown nature strips. The BCS online nature strips planting guideline states "if private planting on a nature strip is deemed inappropriate or unsafe, council may instruct the permit holder to remove it". Nature strips are generally under the management responsibility of councils, but often property owners maintain the front of their property.

Residents may plant their own nature strips but will need to apply for a permit and BCS recommends selecting indigenous plants, with environmental weeds not permitted, and then maintain these in a neat and tidy condition.

Requirements are detailed in the guidelines, which can be found on the Road Occupation Permit section of the council website: [www.basscoast.vic.gov.au/building-planning/building/road-occupationpermit](http://www.basscoast.vic.gov.au/building-planning/building/road-occupationpermit)

### **SCA WORKING BEES**

A small group of dedicated SCA members removed sea spurge from the foreshore between the Sanders Rd and Margo St beach access tracks. Sea spurge invades coastal areas, displacing local species and colonising open sand areas favoured by certain nesting birds. The incomplete removal of the plants' roots can lead to their re-establishment. Even when plants are completely removed, recruitment of seedlings from the seed bank can occur for up to ten years. The broken stems of sea spurge ooze a toxic milky sap. This sap may irritate the skin and is painful if brought into contact with the eyes. Always wear protective gloves and dispose of in green rubbish bins.

**Sea spurge (*Euphorbia paralias*)**



Image source [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Euphorbia\\_paralias](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Euphorbia_paralias)

### **HOW LUCKY ARE WE TO LIVE IN SILVERLEAVES**

Silverleaves is such a wonderful place, with the beautiful beach, the banksias and tea trees and the bird and animal life. We all intuitively know that spending time in nature is good for our health and wellbeing as it allows us to relax and de-stress, there is nothing like a walk along the beach to clear the mind. There is another benefit - a sense of community. Silverleaves is a diverse community but one thing we have in common is our love of the natural environment of Silverleaves.

The SCA has been working hard to protect our Silverleaves environment for the community for the future. It is a small group of dedicated volunteers, and we welcome newcomers and residents alike. Come along to our working bees during the year, meet other Silverleaves people and let us know your concerns. Sometimes the best way of contributing to your community are the small things. If we look around us with the intention to help, we will find ways of doing it, and in the process, we will be contributing to making our community stronger.

## THE EASTERN YELLOW ROBIN



Image source [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eastern\\_yellow\\_robin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eastern_yellow_robin)

The Eastern Yellow Robin is about 15 cm (6 in) in length and are frequently seen in Silverleaves, particularly when you are gardening. They are inquisitive and will watch you digging up weeds or soil and then pounce when they see a worm. They have a sweet voice, a variety of high bell-like piping, a repeated 'chop chop' and some scolding notes.

Breeding takes place in the spring and the nest is a neat cup made of fine plant material and spider web, usually placed in a fork, and expertly disguised with lichen, moss, bark, or leaves.

## THE TIDES ARE A CHANGING!

Have you noticed the change in high and low tides during the month? This occurs because during full or new moons which occur when the Earth, sun, and moon are nearly in alignment average tidal ranges are slightly larger. This occurs twice each month and high tides are a little higher and low tides are a little lower than average. These are called **spring tides**.

Seven days after a spring tide, the sun and moon are at right angles to each other. This produces moderate tides known as **neap tides**, meaning that high tides are a little lower and low tides are a little higher than average. Neap tides occur during the first and third quarter moon, when the moon appears "half full."

Source: <https://oceanservice.noaa.gov/facts/springtide.html#>

## EVERY SEVENTH WAVE IS LARGER?

People say every seventh or ninth wave will be much larger than the rest. Fact or fiction? There is some scientific merit to this as waves do occur in wave groups or sets but there is no real evidence it is every seventh wave.

The saying is likely derived more from a cultural fascination with certain numbers, and it may also be designed to educate shore-dwellers about the necessity of remaining vigilant when near the ocean.

## WEED OF THE MONTH

Weeds pose a major threat to environment, and we are all responsible for managing weeds on our properties as weeds don't obey property boundaries. Long term benefits will only be seen when we all work together.



Image source:

<https://www.bushlandperth.org.au/weeds/spear-thistle/>

Scotch or Spear thistle is native to Europe, Western Asia and North Africa. It has very prickly leaves and showy purple flowers. A single plant can produce more than 20,000 seeds which are easily spread in the wind.

Remove thistles with a mattock or hoe at any growth stage, making sure to remove as much of the root system as possible. Mowing/slashing at bud or early bloom stage will cause plants to resprout. However, close mowing or cutting twice per season will usually prevent seed production. Consistent follow-up work is required for sustainable management. Flowering stems should be collected and destroyed to keep them from forming viable seed.

## WHALE SEASON BEGINS

May to October is the time when Humpback and Southern Right Whales migrate from Antarctica along the Victorian coastline up north to warmer waters off Queensland for calving, before returning south to Antarctica in Spring. They have occasionally been seen off our very own Silverleaves beach over the years.

The Whale festival is a community celebration held each year in Cowes, 30 June - 2 July 2023. For more details <https://islandwhales.com.au/>

## SCA MEMBERSHIP

Payment of SCA membership fees is still unavailable through the SCA website. We will send out a reminder when it is up and running. If you have any queries about the SCA please contact the SCA secretary [silverleavesconservation@outlook.com](mailto:silverleavesconservation@outlook.com)