

SILVERLEAVES CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION INC.

Reg.no 0015325J

NEWSLETTER

March 2022



SCA PRESIDENT REPORT AGM 13 MARCH 2022

Regretfully, this is my final report as President of the SCA. Having led the organisation since November 2012, I feel now is an opportune time to hand the reins to a new leader. I look forward to continuing to serve as an active and committed member of the SCA. I maintain a strong commitment to preserving and enhancing the natural environment and protecting it in the coming decades as we face the multiple threats of climate change, habitat loss and overdevelopment.

Looking back over the last ten years, the SCA has had many successes as an organisation, although sadly a number of losses too as we see the growth in approvals for large houses, and often with that, boundary to boundary vegetation clearance. A key aim has been to preserve the natural environment, characterised by the coastal banksias which give the area its name.

Achievements have included a largely successful campaign to protect the unique salt marsh estuary that is the Rhyll Inlet to the south from development. In 2019, Bass Coast Shire Council placed a Conservation Overlay on the Rhyll Inlet, and we are hopeful that the Distinctive Areas Landscape Strategy will protect it further.

In addition, SCA participated in the protests against the construction of a gas terminal at Crib Point on Western Port. This would have impacted the entire area of Silverleaves and in particular, Observation Point and Rhyll Inlet, a Ramsar site and haven for migratory and many other birds.

Other vital campaign work includes protecting the hooded plovers, as well as improving the local habitat for wildlife including swamp wallabies, echidnas, kookaburras, lizards, snakes and many other species.

There are many ongoing challenges associated with climate change such as coastal erosion worsening along the East Cowes Foreshore, together with the ongoing challenges of marine pollution and irresponsible dog activity. SCA's weed control and replanting work has been outstanding over ten years and there is a visible and positive impact seen along the foreshore as working bees progress to the east. While Western Port Bay is deemed to still be in its original state in places, shorebirds are also under threat and coastal erosion is a very serious problem.

Looking ahead, I hope the SCA can develop a strong and focussed vision for the future. Silverleaves is a unique and vitally important area which must be conserved and enhanced and be protected with help from the SCA. It has been a very rewarding ten years serving as President of the SCA with many memorable meetings held in the Silverleaves Reserve often with visits from the local kookaburras. I find it uplifting to hear their cheerful song and thankful their habitat remains.

M.A. Johnston - SCA President

TRIBUTE TO MARJORIE JOHNSTON

All Silverleaves residents, floral, faunal and human, have benefitted from Marjorie's leadership of the SCA. She has, with her team, sharpened the focus and identity of the SCA and ensured that it has broadened the scope of its activities, without in any way distracting from its core purpose.

Marjorie initially introduced an action plan of strategies and a vision for the SCA in 2012. The strategy included a series of campaigns, including *SCA Against Inappropriate Development (SCAID)*, *Wildlife Conservation*, *Silverleaves Shorebirds Colony Protection*, *Weed Control and Vegetation Protection* and *Save the Rhyll Inlet*. Marjorie led the campaigns in SCAID and Save the Rhyll Inlet herself.

Marjorie has been a wonderful spokesperson for the SCA, in interactions with the Bass Coast Shire Council, and the wider community through letters to the *Advertiser*. She has always encouraged SCA members to think about the environment and what we can all do to protect and enhance the local native vegetation and wildlife.

Marjorie has brought the committee a long way over the last ten years with some great successes and we are very grateful for her leadership and friendship

It is also with great regret that we accept the resignation of Peter Buckingham as Vice President of the SCA and Don Cox as Treasurer.

Peter Buckingham has provided invaluable guidance and support to the President, Treasurer and Secretaries since 2017. Peter's corporate governance knowledge together with his commitment to conservation and enhancement of the natural assets of Silverleaves have brought many positive outcomes. Peter has also been tireless in his efforts writing to Council as part of the campaign to prevent inappropriate development and native vegetation clearing.

Don Cox joined the SCA in 1993 and became Treasurer in 1994. The 1994 AGM minutes stated that "Don couldn't be more pleasant, willing and competent", and that hasn't changed in the ensuing 29 years! Don has been tireless in his efforts over many years in producing detailed reports of SCA's financial status. He has been a dedicated member of the SCA and has played a big role in weed control and vegetation protection and doing whatever jobs needed doing. Don has been a pillar of the SCA committee, and we thank him for such wonderful service of nearly 30 years in Silverleaves.

COMMITTEE MEETING 2022

Saturday 11 June at 3.00pm

Koala Conservation Centre meeting room

Saturday 17 September, 3 pm

Koala Conservation Centre meeting room

Sunday 20 November, 11 am

Silverleaves Reserve.

PLANT STALL 2022

Sunday 12 June, 10 am – 2 pm

Silverleaves Store

WORKING BEES 2022

Saturday 11 June, 10am – 12pm

Weeding/planting along foreshore. Meet at Silverleaves Store at 10 am

Sunday 18 September 10am – 12pm

Removal of sea spurge and other beach invaders along the foreshore. Meet at Silverleaves Store at 10 am

THE SILVERLEAVES RESERVE

SCA committee members Keith McDougall and Myra Holmes met recently with Kevin Anderson, coordinator of Open Spaces BCS, to discuss developing a strategic plan for the Silverleaves Reserve. It was a positive and encouraging exchange of ideas and we look forward to working collaboratively to revitalize the reserve for the future.

The strategic plan will include an overall landscaping and revegetation plan, with the aim of maintaining the natural environment and providing a habitat for wildlife and birdlife, as well as access for community use. The plan will include mulching around identified areas such as groupings of trees to protect existing tree roots from mowing, decrease the need for spraying weeds and revegetate with indigenous trees and shrubs and grasses and display suitable planting options for private property gardens in Silverleaves.

The BCS Arborist team will assess the health and condition of existing trees and begin removing some seen as a safety risk while keeping those suitable as bird and wildlife habitat.

Work on the reserve will begin this year and will be completed in stages. We encourage you to become involved and attend working bees as we begin mulching and planting.

HOODED PLOVERS UPDATE TO 09/03/2022

The Hooded Plovers on Phillip Island have had a good breeding season, but sadly not so at Silverleaves. Across the island there have been 29 nests, 69 eggs, 23 chicks and to date, eleven chicks have fledged from six successful nests. Fledged chicks were at Woolamai, Flynn's Reef, Anchorage Rd, Smiths Beach, Devon Ave and Kitty Miller Bay. Of the 29 nests there have been two nests at Silverleaves. The first nest was found on 24/11/21 with 2 eggs and only lasted one week. There were wallaby tracks going through the nest, but this may not have been the cause of failure. The second nest was found on 24/12/21, there was only 1 egg in the nest and again it lasted about a week.

Because of this high failure rate, remote cameras have been placed by PINP on a few nests around the island. At Silverleaves, it is hoped a pair will have one more clutch so a camera can be put on the nest to find out what might be the cause if it fails.

Report from Jon Fallow Ranger PINP

DISTINCTIVE AREA LANDSCAPE PROJECT

The Distinctive Area Landscape Project (DAL) has significant implications for Silverleaves and Rhyll Inlet planning controls. Bass Coast is experiencing increasing pressure from development, visitors, and the impacts of climate change, which threaten to degrade landscape, environment and heritage values. The Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) has prepared a draft Statement of Planning Policy (SPP) and proposed landscape planning controls to guide the future use, development and management of land in the Bass Coast area for the next 50 years. This includes a framework plan for conservation and identifies long-term protected settlement boundaries. This will have significant implications for Silverleaves and particularly the Rhyll Inlet area and an opportunity to protect the Island's natural beauty into the future.

You can view the draft Bass Coast SPP and proposed landscape planning controls at [Bass Coast | Distinctive Areas and Landscapes Program | Engage Victoria](#). The SCA will be making a submission and you can also comment on the draft DAL by making a submission before 5pm on Friday 29 April. For more information, call 136 186 or email planning.implementation@delw.p.vic.gov.au

SILVERLEAVES IN AUTUMN

The Banksia's are coming into flower, attracting the noisy Honeyeaters and Wattle birds and Rainbow Lorikeets, as well as bats, possums and insects.

NEW HOLLAND HONEYEATER



Image Source [New Holland Honeyeater - eBird](#)

The New Holland Honeyeater is relatively small, about 18 cm, mostly black and white, with a large yellow wing patch and yellow sides on the tail. It is an active bird, and rarely sits still, and is often seen in groups. Sexes are similar in looks but females are slightly smaller in size. The New Holland Honeyeaters love the grevilleas and banksias around Silverleaves.

SCA BROCHURE DISTRIBUTION

We hope you have received the reprinted SCA brochure recently under your door, kindly distributed by SCA members Gillian and Dave Armstrong and Judith Bond. If you would like more brochures, please contact the SCA Secretary.

silverleavesconservation@outlook.com

EROSION WORKS FOR COWES EAST

Construction work has begun with the new 300 metre rock seawall starting at Coghlan Rd and moving west to Rose Avenue in Cowes East, due to be completed by December. There will be a pathway built at the rear of the wall connecting Cowes with Silverleaves in a coastal walk.

BUTTERFLIES AT SILVERLEAVES



Photo Cassandra Thumwood January 2022

This beautiful Imperial Jezebel Butterfly is one of many butterflies and moths found in Silverleaves. Moths and butterflies are an important element of the food chain and are prey for birds, bats and other insectivorous animals. They also pollinate plants as they feed on nectar by collecting pollen on their bodies and carrying it to other plants.

THE BUTTERFLY EFFECT'

You may have heard about the "butterfly effect" where a minor action in one location can have a devastating knock-on effect elsewhere.

Insects and invertebrates are an incredibly important part of our ecosystem at Silverleaves, and this includes ants, flies, cockroaches and spiders. Think carefully about the use of pesticides which can have a detrimental impact not only on the target insect but a whole host of animals and birds. For example, our local echidnas love eating ants, birds eat worms and insects, and micro bats eat mosquitoes and hopefully sandflies!

PHILLIP ISLAND LAND ALLIANCE

Phillip Island Land Alliance (PILA) is a new group gathering together representatives from the many small coastal groups across the Bass Coast Shire, with the aim to collectively advocate to protect and restore the biodiversity values of Phillip Island and this region. This will provide opportunities to network and communicate with a unified voice and common objectives and a platform for a coordinated approach for funding applications and island wide environmental issues. For more information contact Zoe Geyer, zoegeyer@zga.com.au

The SCA is pleased to be involved and will be attending further meetings and keep you informed as the group develops its strategic planning for the future.

DYING TREES

Across Phillip Island you may have seen many dying and dead trees. The Bass Coast Landcare Network have established a sub-committee to investigate this and hope to establish a plan for researching and responding to this issue.

The banksia trees in Silverleaves are suffering as well; many big trees are old and more susceptible to storm and wind damage, some appear to be damaged by borers and disease. After the two storms last year, many trees lost limbs or fell over completely, and some are being cut down by property owners. This is becoming a significant issue as we lose more trees and they are not being replaced. Consider planting a banksia in your garden this winter, plants will be available at the plant stall in June.

RABBIT CONTROL

The Bass Coast Landcare Network have been successful in receiving 3 years' worth of funding to manage rabbit control on Phillip Island, which includes a part-time Rabbit Officer. Our local Council has supported this by establishing a Phillip Island Rabbit Strategy. This work is being done now and by mid-year they will begin implementing actions from the strategy. If you are interested in getting involved in this project contact;

Aaron Stephens – Invasive Species Officer
0456 390 423,
aaron.stephens@basscoastlandcare.org.au.

WEED OF THE MONTH

Agapanthus is common in many gardens around Silverleaves and has pretty blue flowers. Unfortunately, the seed is spread by birds, wind and humans and can easily jump fences into the foreshore and the Rhyll Inlet. 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. Dispose of it in the green bins. 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.



Photo Myra Holmes

Lomandra Longifolia, Spiny-headed Mat-rush

SCA MEMBERSHIP DUE FOR 2022

Make a direct deposit online:

Bendigo Bank
BSB 633 000 Account 132 984 592.

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

Or complete a membership form with your cheque and send to: The Secretary. Silverleaves Conservation Association Inc
P.O. Box 9037 Cowes, VIC 3922

Payments are no longer available through the SCA webpage. To request a membership form, or to let us know your email address, or if you have a query about your membership contact the SCA Secretary.

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