

Winter Newsletter



South Gippsland
Conservation Society

Celebrating over 40 years of conservation

No. 198

June, 2018

What's been happening?

REPORT ON SGCS EXCURSION TO WALKERVILLE AND CAPE LIP- TRAP SUNDAY 22 APRIL 2018

Braving very strong winds and threatening rain, 22 members gathered at Walkerville South on 22 April for our first SGCS excursion for 2018.

Fish Creek member and geologist Gary Wallis gave a lively talk on the local geology, which is mostly sedimentary limestones and sandstones, with some igneous rock including the Greenstone found just around the corner past Bird Rock.

Long-term Inverloch member Eulalie Brewster spoke about the early European settlement of Walkerville South, with production of lime for Melbourne buildings commencing in the 1860s, with a township of about 130 people, a school and community hall (which was later moved to Walkerville North). Eulalie's historical photos of the township, lime-burning kilns and the 450 yard long jetty showed that the coastline has retreated about 20 metres since then. Lime production ceased in the 1920s.

Gary led a walk towards Bird Rock, pointing out numerous fossils of corals and shells, and the



cave/tunnel eroded along a fault line in the cliff rock.

After eating our picnic lunch on the beach, we drove along a very bumpy road to Cape Liptrap lighthouse. The present lighthouse, built in 1951, was the first fully automated lighthouse in Australia,

and was never staffed by keepers. Growth in the surrounding vegetation meant that we could not view the sharply folded rocks in the cliffs of Wyberg Bay immediately west of Cape Liptrap, but we were thrilled to see several Australian fur seals on the rocks and in the sea. Some coastal shrubs were in flower, and one flowering orchid (Parson's Bands, *Eriochilus cucullatus*) was found.

Afternoon tea with blackberry cake concluded the excursion around 3pm, and the rain held off until we were all driving home.

Alison Brewster

CORRECTION

In the last newsletter I incorrectly attributed the Rockpooling in the Dark article to Mike Cleeland. It was actually Rod Webster who went diving in the dark and who generously shared his experience with us. Sorry Rod. (Yvonne Kidd—Editor)



**Tickets for the Discovery activities for the July school holidays are now for sale online at the SGCS website www.sgcs.org.au.
Make your bookings now, and don't miss out, the tickets sell quickly.**

<p>FREE! What's happening to our coastline?</p> <p>What's happening to our coastline? Recent changes at Inverloch have prompted plenty of discussion about natural processes, whether our coast will return to its former profile, and what impact climate change is having. The presenter will describe and explain what natural processes are occurring, and discuss evidence of climate change.</p>	<p>Sunday 8 July, 2-3.30 pm</p>
<p>Astronomy - Dancing With The Stars</p> <p>Join us for a special viewing of the lunar eclipse. See stars and planets through astronomical telescopes. Learn about apps used to navigate the skies. Bring your own astronomy gear if you have any. In the event of cloudy weather this activity will be go ahead as an indoor astronomical research activity in the discovery room.</p>	<p>Sat 14 July,6-7.30 pm</p>
<p>Bag It!</p> <p>A great indoor activity for kids and adults. Everyone gets to decorate and take home their own cloth shopping bag and door hanger reminding shoppers to BYO bag to the shop. A great practical way to learn more about a critical issue for us all.</p>	<p>Weds 4 July,10.30am -12 Weds 11 July,10.30am -12</p>
<p>Dinosaur Discovery – The Caves Rock Platform</p> <p>Come and learn about the dinosaurs that once roamed the Bass Coast area and join the hunt for dinosaur fossils. See the dinosaur footprint, earthquake fault lines, volcanic lava and petrified trees from the age of the dinosaurs. Rock breaking hammers supplied, or BYO. Bonus cave exploration: bring a torch!</p>	<p>Thurs 5 July, 10am-12 pm Sunday 8 July,10am-12 pm Sunday 8 July,1 -3 pm</p>
<p>Dinosaur Discovery – Eagles Nest</p> <p>A special expedition to Eagles Nest to see the site of Australia's first dinosaur bone discovery. See earthquake fault lines, petrified trees and join the hunt for dinosaur fossils with an expert palaeontologist; rock breaking hammers supplied or BYO.</p>	<p>Tuesday 10 July, 1-3 pm Saturday 14 July, 2-4 pm</p>
<p>Dinosaur Palaeolaboratory</p> <p>This activity is an indoors activity suitable for junior and teenage palaeontologists working on local dinosaur bones. Learn how to find and identify Australian dinosaurs, get up to date with the latest palaeontology research, and make your own dinosaur fossil!</p>	<p>Thursday July 5 2-4 pm Tuesday July 10 10-12 pm</p>
<p>Whale Watching</p> <p>Come and enjoy an expert presentation on the migratory whales of Southern Australia, and a coastal whale spotting drive.</p>	<p>Mon 2 July, 1.30-3.30 pm Thurs 12 July,1.30-3.30pm</p>
<p>Wildlife Spotlighting</p> <p>Explore the night for our local nocturnal wildlife. Spotlights supplied, but bring your own torch as well.</p>	<p>Thursday 5 July, 6-7.30 pm</p>

SGCS President's Report

The Society continues to engage with a wide range of issues including, Planning & Development, on ground works, protection and enhancement of our precious natural environment, education and climate change. Below is a short outline of recent issues, upcoming projects and events:

Over the last 2 months I have represented the Society at the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) in relation to a proposed 87 (plus) low density housing development off Reed Crescent, Wonthaggi. The site abuts the Rifle Range, the Rifle Range wetlands and the previous waste landfill and now transfer station. The Society, other local community groups and individuals oppose the proposed development in its present form for various reasons, primarily; inappropriate stormwater management that will impact on the wetlands reserve, lack of open spaces of vegetated linkages/corridors for passive recreation and biodiversity, failure to recognise the site context, water quality, water flows and only one access route which could endanger lives if a fire was to occur. The developer, after several attempts and requests from Council and the community, has not satisfactorily produced complete plans or any details of appropriate stormwater management. A full VCAT hearing is listed for October where all parties will hopefully be able to achieve a liveable and environmentally sustainable outcome that respects future residents and reserve.

A proposed development at Mahers Landing (east of Inverloch on the Tarwin Lower road) has been reported in local newspapers. Many members will remember a previous proposal "Tarwin Cove" on the same land some 13 years ago for a Marina, Golf Course, Hotel and 200 plus houses. "Tarwin Cove" was eventually abandoned by the developer due to community pressure and a government report that listed pros versus cons, with any pros far outweighed by the many environmental and planning cons.

An information evening on 31 May this year, provided provisional plans for a marina, some re-vegetation, a lake and 50% of the site set aside for housing development (potentially 2000 lots) and, under questioning, the potential for dredging the entrance to Andersons Inlet.

Nothing has changed on the site in 13 years except the increased imperative to plan for, mitigate and adapt to, climate change. The clear science that global warming is causing sea level rise requires a paradigm shift in planning/policy/thinking that will protect and allow our important saltmarsh and mangrove wetlands to migrate inland as the sea rises. This will entail removing the levees surrounding Andersons Inlet to allow the sea back into what was formerly coastal wetlands. To date a development application has not yet been submitted to Council. The Society will maintain a watching brief on this project.

"Blue Carbon" is a very efficient means of storing carbon (up to 40 times terrestrial storage) in the sediment/mud under fringing coastal saltmarsh, mangrove wetlands and sea-grasses. Several Blue Carbon research and on-ground Blue Carbon projects are planned for Victoria, including three in Gippsland. Deakin University has submitted a funding application to Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) for a three year partnerships (including SGCS) project. If successful the project will include Education activities to be undertaken by SGCS on the importance and environmental values/eco-services of coastal fringing wetlands and sea -grass.

The Society has received a grant from the Lord Mayors Charitable Fund (LMCF) and the LMCF/Heath- Cosgrove Charitable Fund of \$80,000 for the "*Bass Coast Climate Change Resilience*" research project. This project, using existing research and reports, will primarily examine the resilience of the coast and communities between Venus Bay and Cape Paterson to adapt to rising sea levels, increased storm damage, frequency and intensity of storm fronts and increased coastal erosion. The project will seek community, government agency, including local government input to provide knowledge (historical and anecdotal), relevant reports, historical mapping, any potential management options and stories of our much loved coast. The report is intended to inform the upcoming State Government Coastal Hazard study and provide an insight to the wider community of future climate impacts. More details to come.

We are working the Wonthaggi Seed Bank & Nursery, and Parks Victoria (PV) on the rehabilitation of approximately 10 hectares of public land at Carney's Road, Wonthaggi. The site, surrounded on three sides by Parks Victoria managed bushland, has some significant remnant indigenous vegetation and a small ephemeral wetland. Unfortunately some of the site is heavily degraded by irresponsible vehicle use. The Seed Bank have received a small grant from Bass Coast Shire Council to erect a boundary fence and gates to keep out the hoons. Landcare has provided 3,000 tube stock plants to SGCS for some initial planting. Future plans, yet to be fully developed and subject to approvals from DELWP will develop and enlarge the wetland. Keep an eye on your emails for several upcoming planting days at Carneys Rd and Screw Creek.

The SGCS Executive Committee agreed to donate \$100 to sponsor the People's Choice Award in Groundswell's 2018 Climart competition, which received 50 entries. SGCS auspices Groundswell. The highly successful Climart exhibition, held at Artspace in Wonthaggi during May and June, was designed to increase public awareness of climate change. For more information on Climart and Climate Change, read the article by our member Bron Dahlstrom at this link: <http://artspacewonthaggi.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Newsletter-30-May-2018.pdf>

Good governance – building strong organisations

I know that an article on good governance is probably NOT what you would like to be reading over your breakfast. My interest in good governance is motivated by my belief that:

- if we don't get it right we run the risk of, at worst, exposing the organisation to costs or, potentially, closure; or
- at least, wasting lots of time on inefficient and ineffective practices;
- it is the responsibility of the Executive Committee to dot the I's and cross the T's (among other things).

I used to think good governance just meant making sure we were following the law - even this task has become more complicated and onerous! However good governance also includes the consideration of a range of issues including the roles and responsibilities of the Executive Committee, planning for succession, financial information and understanding, and engagement and communication with members.

Committees and Boards often balk at the idea of having to do this 'navel gazing'. Some consider it a waste of time and feel it is more important to spend the time 'doing what the organisation was set up to do'. Well, creating and maintaining an organisation – a strong, sustainable, focussed organisation – **IS** one of the things the organisation was set up to do. And we won't know the specific activities we want to do within the broad purposes in our constitution if we don't develop a vision and strategy for achieving them.

For small organisations (like SGCS) the task of governing well shouldn't take long. Once processes are in place and are being followed, it is not difficult to review them. We don't need a big policy and procedures manual but we do need a small one!

The Executive Committee has recently begun to review how well it is 'governing'. We have worked our way through a 'Checklist for Good Governance' based on the *Good Governance Principles and Guidance for Not-for-Profit Organisations* guide developed by the Australian Institute of Company Directors. (if you would like a full copy of the Checklist – to read over dinner maybe? – please email me at

info@sgcs.org.au).

The checklist asks the Committee to consider questions in the following areas:

- Roles and Responsibilities
- Committee Composition and succession planning
- Purpose and Strategy of the organisation
- Risk Management
- Organisational Performance
- Effectiveness of the Committee
- Integrity and Accountability
- Organisation Building
- Culture and Ethics
- Engagement

The Committee has developed a workplan to address concerns raised during discussion of these topics and will gradually be moving through each of the concerns.

For example, at the last meeting the Committee considered a draft process for induction of new Committee members. The Committee has discussed succession planning and are more actively addressing how we can encourage new people to join the Committee. (are **you** interested? – if you've read this far you would be an ideal candidate!).

We have also begun to discuss how to make financial reports clearer and easily understood by all members of the Committee. In particular, we need to represent grant money as a liability so that we do not spend it on, for example, chocolate biscuits for the AGM. We also hope to be able to develop a budget for 2018/19 so that we can better manage the Society's finances.

Thanks for reading this article. The Committee is keen to hear from and involve members in all aspects of the work of the Society. The names of the Committee members are on the back of the newsletter – please contact one of us or email to info@sgcs.org.au if you have any feedback or ideas for consideration.

Annette Read, Vice President

What's up in our National Parks

Snippets from the Bushwalking Victoria Leadership Forum provided by Wendy Davies, Chair, SGCS Education Committee

Simon Talbot, the Chief Operating Officer of Parks Victoria spoke at the forum and announced the pleasing news that Parks Victoria is about to recruit an additional 105 new rangers.

Given visitation to parks across Victoria increased 20% last year, and that people from the Chinese and Indian communities are increasingly keen to engage in nature, it was also good to hear that the recruits will be from culturally diverse communities.

Some of the rangers will be “health rangers” – Parks Victoria acknowledges the strong evidence in rehabilitation science that people do better in the outdoors than in the gym when they are recovering from illness and injury.

Parks also plans to disperse visitors from one area in parks, to several areas – given the car parks were overflowing at the Prom on Christmas day last year this sounds like a good idea – also separating day visitors from campers and busing day visitors by using a park and ride system. The overcrowding has become a health and safety risk, with people parking outside of designated carparks, and blocking roads so that emergency

vehicles can not get in if needed.

Parks Victoria is also keen to promote “fully facilitated walks” where visitors meet with a ranger and spend the day with them, and local food and beverages are supplied. The main demographic for this style of visiting across Australia is women aged from 40-65 years from Melbourne who comprise 29% of the cohort. Guess what, I’ve realised I’m one of them!. Millennials (Wikipedia tells me this is 22 to 37 year olds) are also keen to engage in nature.

Parks realises that the infrastructure needs to be improved, and that Victoria is lagging behind other States and Territories and New Zealand as a destination. Simon commented that he thought that 60% of parks are not up to the standard they should be with old signs, poor toilet facilities and walking tracks not properly maintained. Simon also spoke about a proposal (he sounded serious) to make the Prom a sanctuary by putting up a 7km vermin proof fence across the Yanakie isthmus. This would allow the Prom to be regenerated to what it was like before world war two – by elimination of feral animals such as cats, foxes and deer.

It was refreshing to hear the management problems in our National Parks are being acknowledged, and that the State Government is putting some resources in, especially given the huge increases in visitors – we don’t want to love our parks to death.

Can you help identify this



What is it? Small mounds of sand/earth (about 10cm across) appear in my lawn almost daily, and I don't know what makes them. There's no visible hole in the mound, and no feet or claw marks around it. It's much too small to be made by a rabbit, and definitely not by an echidna. Is it a lizard? spider? Any ideas? If you can solve this mystery, please email info@sgcs.org.au or leave a message on the phone: (03) 5674 3738.

Contacting the SGCS

Newsletter Contributions

Editor: Yvonne Kidd
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 Please email contributions to info@sgcs.org.au
 Deadline for next issue: 31st August

You are welcome to contact any of the Executive Committee members to discuss the activities of the Society or ideas for future activities.

Thanks to all who have renewed their membership for 2018/19 in response to my recent email/letter. If you did not receive any correspondence from me or have any membership queries please either email me at membership@sgcs.org.au or ring me on 0437 433 365.

Annette Read

SGCS Excursions Programme—dates for your diary

July 22nd Grantville Conservation Reserve	Jenny Reskje	Jenny will take us on a walk through this large reserve where we will look at the plants and orchids growing there.
September 23rd Wonthaggi Public Land	Aileen Vening	Wonthaggi is surrounded by large expanses of public land as a legacy of coal mining. Aileen will guide a walk around a selection of these reserves and their significant flora and fauna and we will hear about their history.
November 25th Dave's Place, Arawata	Dave Sutton	Walk through Dave Sutton's revegetation site to see how the bare Strzelecki hills can be brought back to their former glory. Find out how much carbon this land can absorb. Followed by the CHRISTMAS BREAK UP PICNIC

Executive Committee

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