



Issue: 06 August 2015

Winter Edition

Locals caring for our local environment

**NEWS – Mornington Pier Reopens**

After five years of restoration the Mornington Pier officially reopened on 8th August!

Reconstruction of the central section commenced in 2010, when many of the piles supporting the pier were found to be rotted and planking was being carried away in storms. Nearly \$19 million has been spent by both Liberal and Labor governments, supervised by Parks Victoria (who are responsible for most piers in Victoria). The outer pier section which has been subject to much discussion by the Harbour Stakeholder Group ,(MEA had two representatives on this) early in 2014 and of course, has been interrupted by bad weather and problems with the outer concrete panels.

The public was invited to the “Community Celebration” which started at 10 am, and included various activities and a free sausage sizzle. Hope you supported MEA there! You could meet many interested stakeholders!

The renovation of the Pier forecourt will start in the next month or so, and includes levelling of the various slopes, signage, seating and services and the renovation of the old bluestone toilet block. The cobblestones will be levelled. More parking will probably NOT eventuate though there is an increase in disabled parking. MEA objected to the provision of a bus parking and roundabout at the Harbour as we considered these unnecessary but we have been over-ruled. We are assured that the area will be more ‘pedestrian-friendly’.

Watch out for potential rock slides if the cliff off Schnapper Point is cut into (as intended!).

With the pier re-construction complete, the well developed and unusual marine habitat around the piles—seaweeds, kelp and shellfish with accompanying seahorses, sea urchins and numerous fish should be able to re-colonise in peace! Divers will be relieved.

**DATES TO NOTE****August**

- 8 Pier Opening from 10:00 AM
- 11 Biodiversity Meeting 6:00PM
- 13 MEA Meeting
- 16 Working Bee - Mills Beach
- 30 Working Bee - Tanti Creek

**September**

- 10 MEA AGM

**MEA Annual General Meeting**

Thursday 10th September 7:30PM

Our AGM is on Thursday 10th September at 7.30 pm in the meeting room of the Mornington Library, Vancouver St, Mornington. Well known ecologist Mal Legg will report on his yearlong study of the fauna of Mornington from Belgrave Hill to Linley Point, using a grant from the Shire's Natural Systems section. Mal did the original survey nearly 10 years ago, and we really want to know if all our work on restoring the habitat of the foreshore has resulted in an increase in animals. Apparently, we still haven't got our echidnas back! Come and hear what we have got. Business will be kept to a minimum, and supper served.

**The Foreshore Advisory Groups**

These groups around the Peninsula are under review. Will all community input be cancelled? Keep an eye on local media to find out.

## *Jan Oliver* MEA PRESIDENT RECEIVES QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY HONOURS — OAM

Congratulations have been flowing to Jan, who was awarded the Order of Australia Medal (OAM) in the June Queen's Birthday Honours. MEA Members are thrilled about this terrific news.

Jan's conservation, environment and community work has been a prominent part of her life on the Peninsula.

**Jan has been President of MEA for the past five years.** She has been an activist and advocate for protection and sustainability on the foreshore and surrounds. Including the successful campaign to save Mornington from being a marina town. She is **coordinator of the Mills Beach Friends, Treasurer of the Friends of Tanti Creek**, these groups work on revegetation, eradication of weeds and conserving the natural habitat for flora and fauna. She has coordinated the Mills Beach and Tanti Creek **Clean up Australia Day** for many years. By any standards this must have been an enormous undertaking. She is also a member of the Harbour Steering group and the Mornington Foreshore Advisory Group, Treasurer of Peninsula Exchange, a member of the Ratepayers Association, and frequently represents the wider community in dealing with Shire issues of public interest.

This year Jan was elected Vice President of Mornington U3A. She is a keen participant in several group programmes but in addition volunteers as an Art Tutor leading three, always full, classes a week. In addition, Jan is a member of the Peninsula Arts Society and was the Secretary of the Committee during 2013-14. She just keeps on working tirelessly for the benefit of others. To end her day she turns to computer games, her own pursuit of art and her love of music .

As a recent member of the Mornington community, I witnessed Jan's commitment to local people, places and worthy causes. Is it any wonder then, that our family became actively engaged with MEA, U3A and PAS? Jan opened these doors to us and introduced us to new opportunities and new ways to contribute to our new community.

Jan, we are proud and amazed by your capacity to give and achieve so much. The members of MEA honour your efforts wholeheartedly. You are truly a worthy recipient of this significant honour.

Jude Burrows, Newsletter Assistant .

### Australia's Declining Predators Bring Rise of Possums

Dr Jeff Yugovic's paper on the Disappearance of Predators (including detailed discussion of possums and the lack of anything eating them) is now on our web site under Current Issues. It is also available direct from Jan by email request. (morningtonea@gmail.com) Jeff spoke to a large MEA meeting in July and caused a lot of comment. In our urban areas, we are all over-run by ring-tailed possums (can't be killed), and Brush tailed (you need a permit to remove) and our gardens and street trees are being decimated.



Jan Oliver with Mishka working at Friends of Tanti Creek Working Bee.

## BIODIVERSITY RESEARCH PROJECTS AND BROCHURE

The Shire has released a draft Biodiversity Paper *Mornington Peninsula Biodiversity: Surveys and Research Highlights* for the whole Peninsula and it makes interesting reading. You can respond to it (it is on line on [www.mornpen.vic.gov.au](http://www.mornpen.vic.gov.au) “Have your say”). One of MEA’s key objectives is the enhancement and protection of our biodiversity (plants and animals) and we should be following this up. You can request the Mornington Service desk to photocopy a colour copy for you.

MEA commented on this draft, which is a well designed, easy to read brochure with beautiful coloured photographs of plants and animals and habitats across the Peninsula. Some of the maps are useful though small scale means the vegetation map is unreadable. What is most interesting is the list of Projects the Shire is undertaking including those with Friends Groups and Stakeholder input. We suggested that this section be expanded as it is good to know how our work on crown land fits in with the overall Plan for the Peninsula. There are obviously gaps in research and perhaps we should consider applying for grants to cover these. This is one flaw in that most research projects are those ending in 2011 so that, for example, Mal Legg’s review of fauna for us along the Mornington foreshore, is not included. But overall, we look forward to seeing the final brochure.

We are also being asked to participate in the **Review of Victorian Vegetation regulations** as to clearing, tree removal etc. at a meeting in Rosebud Library meeting room on Monday 10<sup>th</sup> August at 5.30 pm organised through Peninsula Speaks ([info@peninsulaspeaks.org.au](mailto:info@peninsulaspeaks.org.au))

## SCHNAPPER POINT, MOTHERS' AND SCOUTS' SEAS OF GREEN

Go and have a look at Mornington as a sea of Green Corflute shields around plants! We have had a very busy month with working bees, and the Green Army as well. Look along the bayside from Schnapper Point to the new Mothers' Beach toilet landscaping (planted by

Green Army team on 23 July). Also look to the dune and slopes above Mothers' Beach (planted by Naturelinks 3 times). The original plantings were totally ripped up by vandals. The shields were thrown around and the area wrecked

during the school holidays - and two further attempts were needed to get the plants re planted and shielded.

Early in July combined working bees planted over 250 tough tube stock on Schnapper point. We were greatly assisted by four children on holidays who distributed shields, stakes and water. The plants replaced some of our work from 4 years ago. Visitors are already commenting on the attractive cliff tops.

Also in July, Friends of Mills Beach planted the dune in front of **Scouts Beach** boat hire and picnic area to try and stabilise the sandy dune .



## Major Works at Mills Beach



**Contractors install the concrete reinforcement for the wall and ramp outside the Life Sailing Club**

Mills Beach itself is in chaos at present – the renovations of the wall in front of the Life Saving Club are well under way with massive concreting, extension of the bluestone wall and landscaping. Work will take several months to complete and include three ramps – no steps – to improve access. Friends of Mills Beach will eventually be involved in the further restoration of the area once the Precinct stage 1 and 2 are complete. We have lost out here! Four large trees and much understorey (everything less than four metres has been planted by us) will be removed from the car park and beach access so that the car park and picnic areas can be tidied up. We have put in submissions, attended public consultation, roused the neighbours and threatened to tie ourselves to the trees, but in vain! The new ramp and picnic area with BBQ at the top of the ramp will provide a very unsafe area for children with traffic. There will be some

attempt to separate vehicles from foot people walking down the main drive but we will see what happens! Local residents and MEA have declined to go to VCAT to fight against the Shire here – it is unlikely we would win a very expensive battle!

Around the back of the Clubhouse, replanting of the destroyed vegetation on the slopes has been undertaken by Green Army team, with indigenous supervision as the area is now a Heritage site. The midden and original ash site were uncovered by the Club during non-permitted excavations some 16 months ago. A new committee of the MLS has already approached MEA for discussions on various issues of joint interest.



Stage 3 of Mills Beach Precinct (the car park closest to Red Bluff cliff) has no funds from the Shire until 2016-17.

Friends of Mills Beach continues to work along Mills Beach with assistance from our contractors, Naturelinks.

## Tanti Creek

Our working bee for July trialled a Tuesday morning to see if this attracts more volunteers. Ten workers moved up the Creek – away from the estuary and the Green Paddock to Stone's Crossing. The bank was planted using the Friends and additional Friends from Mt Eliza (whom we met at the Green Army BBQ at Mills Beach!). Stone's is the site of one of the Waterwatch testing sites and is heavily used by pedestrian traffic. The opposite (ie closest to Mornington) bank below Morven Manor is being restored by the Shire, so the new plantings will add to the rehabilitation of this Creek area. Tanti Creek Friends also inspected much further upstream at Richardson's Reserve beyond Hunter's Bridge and nearer the railway line running along Watt Road. The Creek there runs between heavily weed infested banks, steep gullies and a lot of debris and is not for volunteer working bees! Melbourne Water is gradually restoring this rather formidable area and has guaranteed to keep funding our working bees downstream.



At Stones Crossing

## The Green Army

Members of the Green Army (funded by the Federal Government) worked for a week along the track from Shire Hall Beach up onto Red Bluff, to join up with our weeding and planting under our Tracks and Lookouts Coastcare Grant; we hope to see them again later in the year. The team of 8 men and women cleared woody weeds and then planted some of the cleared areas (over the pathway fence). We all joined together in a celebratory BBQ on 2nd July so that Friends from Mt Eliza and Mills Beach could meet the young team. The team is getting trained in a lot of outdoor activities.



MEA, Mt Eliza Friends and the Green Army BBQ at Mills Beach



Green Army removing weeds along track on Red Bluff

In August Green Army is working on the slopes of Fisherman's Beach to supplement the work of the Friends of Fishies.

## RED BLUFF SIGNAGE

Two interpretive signs explaining the plants, animals and the geology of Red Bluff will be installed at each end of the main track in August.



Robert Loutit

Robert Loutit's *Shipwreck on Red Bluff* is an artist's impression of an incident in the mid 1860s and appears on one of the interpretive signs.

## MORNINGTON YACHT CLUB building relations with community

The new Club CEO and the current President of the Yacht Club met briefly with MEA president, Jan Oliver for a photo shoot with the Mayor and we agreed this is a good time to move on from the prickly relations which evolved during the Club's application to build a marina in the harbour. We still never want to see one! The MYC intends putting in indigenous gardens around their boat park. (This storage area in the most prestigious foreshore IS a bone of contention for MEA).

This follows on from their application to renew their lease for 21 years for the whole yard, premises and The Rocks restaurant at a reduced rent. MEA submitted that better notification of the public and stakeholders should have been carried out about this application, and that MYC has to monitor potential pollution in its yard. We appeared in front of two councillors (Dixon and Fraser) at a special council meeting in July. We also challenged the Shire to prove that a Club with large debts and unknown financial situation (documents were not supplied to us), should be given the lease of such a large and iconic site. We have requested a copy of the lease but have heard nothing further.

Several of our members are keeping a watchful and active eye on this situation.

## PLANNING ISSUES

MEA can spend a lot of time responding to Planning issues (relating to those Yellow signs that pop up) and we really need some help with these.

- The old garage site in Main Street opposite DOCS is up for tender for a mix of shops & apartments.
- The proposed apartments of 3 storeys in Herbert Street have been sent to VCAT as the Shire and several local residents (including some of our members!) objected.
- Beleura hospital has built a prefab rehabilitation centre which was lifted into position by crane.
- Major reconstruction at the Bays Hospital Complex in Mornington is still not underway though Planning notices have come and gone many months ago.
- The heritage house at 1 Barkly Street has been lost to developers.
- Andrew Kerr Complex work has started on rebuilding with construction huts and electrical wires all installed.
- There are dozens and dozens of development proposals for clearing of old buildings and replacement by at least 2-3 units or townhouses (sometimes 4) around Mornington - Mt Eliza and Mt Martha. All these will result in removal of native vegetation – especially large trees which normally support lots of birds, small animals and possums! We have to often decide - do we object to everyone?

Of these, look out for

- La Porchetta café is planning an extension;
- 40 warehouses and a café are to be built at 33 Milgate Drive;
- Long proposed retirement village in Barkly Street with 44 independent living units is up for Planning Permit; and Mornington Golf Course is expanding one corner and building a new hole!

If you need the full list, contact Jan!

## **YARINGA BOAT HARBOUR PANEL**

As many of you know, MEA put in an anti-development submission to the proposed expansion of Yaringa Boat Harbour, the building of a canal estate, 150 accommodation units for tourists, and an expanded boat maintenance industry. The proposal smacked of Mornington Harbour proposal – the use of crown land and water for private development by a proponent who lived in the area.

The Panel was chaired by Mr Nick Wimbush, who chaired the Mornington Harbour Marina Panel back in 2011. The Yaringa Panel heard much technical argument from the proponent, but a lack-lustre lot of arguments from the Shire. Not many submitters appeared to care that Westernport could have major impacts, that acid sulphate soil was being dug up, that the canals relied on a dubious dyke system using the tidal movement, and that there appeared to be little economic justification. Local residents were divided – some wanted it but others strongly objected especially on noise, loss of amenity and damage to the natural systems grounds – including the Ramsar site protecting migratory birds. Mal Legg put up a strong case to protect the area because of the confirmed presence of the threatened Southern Bandicoot and other animals. What is interesting now is that several government departments have put up long lists of conditions and requirements and several appeared to object to the whole proposal especially its size. We await results!

## **DEALING WITH DEAD BEACHED WILDLIFE**

No one seems to know officially what to do with dead beached wildlife. Following rough weather over the past month or so, dead birds including a Rosella, 2 Fairy penguins, a 1 metre long gummy shark, a large octopus and many feathers have appeared on Mornington beaches. We have buried some, others thrown back into the sea to let nature take its course and some placed in bins. A reminder to all – don't destroy or allow children to destroy or dogs to pick up the 11-armed sea star – it is prickly and doesn't look too good but it is supposed to be in our shallow waters and should be left alone.



Gannet washed up on Mothers' Beach

## **CAN THE SHIRE GO CARBON NEUTRAL?**

Recently the Shire called for submissions on proposals to increase sustainability and go carbon neutral – ie. using green initiatives to counteract the carbon dioxide being emitted across the Peninsula by various Shire activities. Such activities include the tips (which emit 48% of all the carbon dioxide here), street lighting, transport, lights and maintenance of Shire buildings and public spaces.

MEA pointed out that merely using more solar panels, changing light bulbs and adopting an expensive Option 7 (requiring the highest commitment to reducing CO<sub>2</sub>) still did not address the waste disposal issue (which also includes transport to the waste dumps). We suggested that growing gardens on Shire roofs, planting high yielding oxygen plants such as maize on our footpaths, and for Council officers and Councillors to use bikes or public transport. We know the mayor is driving a hybrid (diesel/electric) car but compared with all the Shire vehicle traffic, this virtually nothing! The Shire has to establish a large area of open space in which to plant trees as offset for indigenous vegetation being removed across the Peninsula. At present, there is not a single site on the Peninsula which does this, so when trees are removed along the foreshore (as at Mills Beach), offset planting has to be done very locally or not at all. Developers SHOULD be undertaking offset plantings – of native trees, not imported ones which are commonly seen around our parks.

We also want to see the Shire guaranteeing that restoration by working bees is supported throughout the Peninsula – we know planting indigenous plants helps – and looks good too!

Measures to reduce carbon will take time and money. But they have to be done – even if the current federal government doesn't want to set challenging targets for carbon removal and going green!

The Shire has acknowledged our submission and we await results!

## MEA AT MORNINGTON FARMER'S MARKET

MEA was delighted to be able to hold a free community stall at the Farmer's Market in April. We showed photos of our work and MEA's areas of interest which attracted comment from passer-bys. We didn't, however pick up any new members.

We were approached by a representative of Corporate Volunteers who offered us the manpower of a team of workers to help at one of our working bees later this year.

We are most grateful to Scott Crowe for the loan of his large garden umbrella.



Ann and Christine talk with an interested shopper at the stall.

### Contact Us:

- [www.morningtonenviro.org.au](http://www.morningtonenviro.org.au)
- [morningtonea@gmail.com](mailto:morningtonea@gmail.com)
- PO Box 580 Mornington 3931
- **Monthly meetings**

7:30PM 2nd Thursdays Feb. –Dec.

Mornington Library Meeting Room.

*President:* Jan Oliver

0417986077

*Vice Pres.:* Christine Stewart  
59756687

*Secretary:* Franz Bjerkhamn  
0407572089

*Tanti Creek Friends:* Martin Lenard  
0427888712  
[mlenard@bigpond.net.au](mailto:mlenard@bigpond.net.au)

*Mills Beach Friends:* Jan 0417986077,  
[morningtonea@gmail.com](mailto:morningtonea@gmail.com)

*Fisherman's Beach:* Peter Deerson:  
[pdeerson@netscape.net](mailto:pdeerson@netscape.net)

### WEBSITES OF INTEREST

- [www.cleanupourwater.com.au](http://www.cleanupourwater.com.au)
- [www. info@peninsulaspeaks.org.au](mailto:info@peninsulaspeaks.org.au)
- [www.marineconservation.org.au](http://www.marineconservation.org.au)
- [www.ppwcma.org.au](http://www.ppwcma.org.au)
- [www.landcareonline.com.au](http://www.landcareonline.com.au)
- [www.nattrust.com.au](http://www.nattrust.com.au)

### WORKING BEES

Volunteers meet to work and care for the following areas: see page 1 for contacts

**Mills Beach** - 3rd Sunday of the month  
9:30—11:30

**Tanti Creek** - Last Sunday of the month  
9:30—11:30  
and occasional Tuesdays  
contact Martin for details.

**We value your support!**



### You can be involved

If you would like to join in, membership forms are available on the web site.

Fees are: Family \$15; Single \$10; Concession \$7  
You can write to Mornington Environment Association Inc. P.O.Box 580 Mornington 3931 or

**email** [morningtonea@gmail.com](mailto:morningtonea@gmail.com)

Please include name, address, phone and email address.

Working bee volunteers are contacted by email or phone.