

President's Report

Welcome everyone. It is my pleasure to be presenting this report. I continue to be in awe of the hours of work, the knowledge and commitment of our volunteer leaders, and their teams. A big thank you to everyone; and especially to my fellow committee members – Ann Robb, V/Pres. Jill McIver, Sec. Marty Lenard, Treas. and Peter Nicholson. Many thanks to Friends' groups leaders - Marty Lenard –Tanti Creek friends, Peter Nicholson – Beleura cliff Path, Peter Deerson – Fishies Beach, Brian Burrows – Mills Beach. Thank you to Jan Oliver- always available for advice and support, and to Jude Burrows for our Newsletter.

I would like to acknowledge the enthusiasm and many hours of work that our retiring Secretary, Jill McIver, has spent for our organisation. Previously President and then Secretary for the past 4 years – Thank you so much Jill for your wonderful work, keeping all the threads together. We look forward to you being in an advisory role for the future, and continuing as our Devilbend rep.

As Covid-19 took hold, we learned how to use Zoom – such a godsend being able to continue communicating with each other. Phone calls and e-mails are also being used extensively . We certainly look forward to being able to hold our working bees again – as there are plenty of plants ready to go in, shields to remove and weeding to be done.

We have actually had a very successful and busy year. Some highlights:

- Kaufland – MEA was one of the objectors who successfully stopped this inappropriate development.
- Signage at Tanti Creek and Estuary officially opened
- Milford path behind Morven Manor opened
- Grants – successful grants have been obtained from S.E. H2O, Shire, Coast Care, Community Placement – MornPen and 15 Trees.
- Clean Up Australia Day – thanks Brian Burrows
- We have been represented at the Waste Forum - Ann Robb, Devilbend – Jill McIver, Volunteer Friends Network – Marty Lenard, Climate strategy – Jan Oliver
- We are now being assisted by “Working for Vic”, replacing the Green Army

- Peter Nicholson negotiated with land holders and the Shire and has successfully resolved the drainage issue on Beleura Hill which was causing erosion and damaging the Cliff path

MEA has made submissions to:

- Support 'Boomerang' with container legislation advocacy – for refund container collections kept in communities
- AGL – objection and request for hearing at Tribunal. Several members have put in their own objections to this terrifying, oversized off-shore development which threatens RAMSAR rated mangrove wetlands and the local marine habitat.
- Ryman – objection to an oversized and inappropriate development on the Green wedge. Opposed by MornPen.
- We sent letter of support to Minister to change zoning, thus preventing development in Green wedge.

MEA is addressing some ongoing issues:

- Objection to proposed expansion of Dromana Quarry into bushland.
- Mountain bike riders damaging the bushland for their jumps
- Problem with myna birds in Mornington
- Problem with cats in Mornington
- Planting on nature strips not following overlay guidelines
- Lobbying for a register of significant native trees list
- Resolving Snap Send Solve location and reporting issues

To conclude on a positive note:

- ◆ We have purchased and begun using our wild life cameras. Thanks Marty.
- ◆ We have an upgraded our website. Thanks Peter Pavey.
- ◆ A new Friend's group for the Railway Reserve is being formed by Charlie Clarke
- ◆ Tree removal now requires permit (exceptions granted in fire zones)

Wishing everyone a safe, healthy and happy time for Christmas, and on into the year 2021.

Margaret Howden
President MEA