



Mornington Environment Association

NEWS

caring for our local environment

We acknowledge the Bunurong People of the Kulin Nation, the Traditional custodians of the land upon which we gather.

Caring for Mills Beach beside the Life Saving Club

Area A next to the Life Saving Club was the earliest planted area of Mills Beach (in 2007). Since then it has been replanted every year as it receives a lot of use, and the old banksias have lost branches or fallen down. This means we have to clear away logs and leave some as seats and barricades.

We managed to block the main path through the area and spinifex has now taken over allowing other lower level plants to grow.

Jan Oliver



Dolphins Frolicked in Port Phillip Bay



In June, up to 200 dolphins were counted enjoying the east side of the bay waters along Mount Martha, Mornington and Mount Eliza. What a treat to see! Residents living on Mornington Esplanade could eat their breakfast while enjoying the frolics of the dolphins and many locals fishing on the pier shared the event.



Also in June, the **Dolphin Research Institute** Bulletin announced that they now have the first concrete evidence of the movement of common dolphins. Tracking from the Mornington area in Port Phillip Bay to Bass Strait near Inverloch. This discovery adds crucial understanding to support the protection of our region's common dolphins. This knowledge flows from the completion of the first phase of the Phillip Island Common Dolphin Catalogue with nearly 80 individual dolphins. This is an important milestone after years of data analysis and surveys in Bass Strait off Phillip Island and on to Inverloch. You can access this catalogue from www.dolphinresearch.org.au. The first dolphin to provide the evidence (pictured above) has been named the "TRAVELLER". Source: Dolphin Research Institute.

Curb side recycling - avoid contamination of recycling bins



The correct use of the rubbish bins is essential if recycling is to work in this Shire.

Mornington Shire Waste Management team are now spot checking recycling bins to see who is doing the right thing and who is not; they then attach a gold star or an “oops” sign.

Most people are now doing the right thing (I got a gold star) however still between 10 and 20 % of recycling bins are contaminated; this makes recycling much more difficult and inefficient as if there is too much contamination the sorters on the conveyor belt lines cannot cope.

The main contaminants are plastic bags and styrofoam / polystyrene. Although these items are plastic they cannot be recycled via the recycling bins processing systems. Styrofoam / polystyrene **is not recycled by our Shire** and should go in general rubbish bin.

Soft plastic bags should go to recycling containers provided outside supermarkets. This plastic is now being recycled into public outdoor furniture in Victoria

Has anyone else got a tag on their bin? Please let us know via our email: morningtonea@gmail.com.

By Ann Robb

Recycling bin blown over during a storm and containing lots of styrofoam. In the WRONG bin.



Clean Up Australia Day Mills Beach Foreshore Reserve Autumn 2022

About thirty volunteers turned up for our Clean Up Day at Mills Beach, with some regulars going to the other site at Hunters Crossing on Tanti Creek. We collected 12 bags of rubbish and recyclables, including a lot of small bits and pieces which are often overlooked. We extended the clean up from Red Bluff to Shire Hall beach and Scouts Beach.

Importantly, I have received feedback from several people who expressed an interest in joining Friends of Mills Beach. Additionally, another person who was unable to attend the Clean Up has expressed an interest in the Friends of Mill beach and MEA. By following up, and welcoming new members MEA will hopefully have more assistance at the monthly working bees. Brian Burrows

Lined with beautiful beach boxes and with a clear view of the city, Shire Hall Beach in Mornington has for centuries been a well-loved, family swimming beach. It was named after the Mornington Council's offices that were located just across the road more than 100 years ago. Shire Hall is the beach to the eastern end of Mothers Beach.

In around 2011, however, things began to change for Shire Hall Beach, with the installation of a wave screen on Mornington Pier. Since that time, the shoreline of the beach has become filled with rocks, stretching up to 6 metres into the water, for the entire length of the beach. The sand is rapidly being lost from this beach and around the boatsheds. The beach is narrowing and the sand has become dark and discoloured. Shire Hall Beach is disappearing.

It is not just anecdotal evidence that supports the position that the major cause of the erosion is the installation of the wavescreen on Mornington Pier. There were a number of studies conducted on the Mornington Harbour area and the surrounding beaches as part of the "Safe Harbour" planning application that was being considered in around 2011. The Safe Harbour proposal included the installation of wave screens on the pier, among other things.

Effects Statement Inquiry Report for the Safe Harbour proposal (dated 2011), stated as follows:

"Key tenets from the Inquiry's hearings are...[that]coastal processes will change as a result of the wavescreens and reduction of wave action. Changes will be evident through an increase in beach erosion from Shire Hall Beach and accretion onto Scout Beach and little change to beach morphology at Mothers Beach." (section 7.3, page 62).

The changes to Shire Hall Beach that have occurred over the last 10 years have occurred almost exactly as predicted by the studies. The only difference is that Mothers Beach, rather than Scout Beach, seems to have been the recipient of the sand lost off Shire Hall Beach. Visitors to Mothers Beach will notice the beach has more sand than ever before.

Perhaps the most tragic part about the loss of this beach is that the wavescreen was built by Parks Victoria, sanctioned by the Mornington Shire Council and approved by DELWP. All organisations who are charged with protecting our beautiful natural assets and local community.

Join us to ask those agencies, once again, to restore Shire Hall Beach. Sign the community petition to make an impact to our local environment: <https://www.change.org/saveshirehallbeach>

In 2013 Museums Victoria (MV), established a project to photograph as much of Victoria's rich and varied wildlife as possible. Under the leadership of Dr Mark Norman, then Head of Sciences at MV, David Paul, an experienced scientific photographer was employed to undertake this task.

Since then, David has accompanied Museum scientists around the state and taken nearly 10,000 images of more than 600 species. This project has focused on rare and rarely seen species and animals that are difficult to photograph.

These amazing images are freely available on line at the following address [collections.museumsvictoria.com.au/search?](https://collections.museumsvictoria.com.au/search?collection=Catching+The+Eye+Victorian+Wildlife+Image+Collection)

collection=Catching+The+Eye+Victorian+Wildlife+Image+Collection

From here you can access all Catching the Eye images. Insert the genus, species or common name in the SEARCH bar then use the Add+ button to start your search.

The photographs are fascinating however the amount of information about each item in this collection is limited. When I spoke to an Information Officer at the Museum about this she referred me to **The Atlas of Living Australia**, which is also available on line and contains a wealth of information about wildlife of all kinds.

I hope you enjoy this great resource. I particularly love the photos of insects. They are miracles of colour and intricacy when you can observe them up close through the lens of David's camera.

Janet Limb 2022

Catching the Eye: Victorian Wildlife Image Capture Project



Sweet Bursaria

Sweet Bursaria is a shrub or small tree widespread on the Mornington Peninsula. The common name Sweet Bursaria reflects its sweet pittosporum-like scent and the attractive panicles of small star-like white flowers blanketing the bushes.

Its scientific name is *Bursaria spinosa*. *Bursaria* (Greek "*bursa*" - a sac or pouch) describes the purse-like seed capsules that are prominently displayed from late summer onwards. *Spinosa* refers to the thorny/spiny nature of the most common sub-species.

The pleasant summer floral display and handsome tessellated box-like bark make it a useful specimen plant or an alternative hedging plant.



Sweet Bursaria seed capsules

The twiggy and thorny nature of the bushes make them ideal sites for spiders' webs. When flowering the sweet nectar attracts numerous insect species that are trapped in the webs, in turn attracting numerous indigenous birds. Birds such as Grey Fantails, New Holland Honeyeaters and Brown Thornbills are also reliant on the collection of spider web remnants to knit their nests together.

Due to its prickly nature *B. spinosa* is often the only native plant remnant in overgrazed farming areas. It thus plays an important ecological role where natural regeneration of bushland is being attempted. The bushes provide a protective framework for young native seedlings to germinate, whilst the flowers provide a nectar and larval food source for birds, beetles, butterflies and other insects.

Sweet Bursaria will make a valuable contribution to both garden and bushland regeneration plantings.

Adapted from: Phil Watson- Association of Societies for Growing Australian Plants Inc. 2001. **prepared by M.Lenard.**



Autumn colours of the Sweet Bursaria seed

MEA thanks Salesforce Staff volunteers

work location



<https://photos.app.goo.gl/bSkpe54HYhTBwDyq9>

MEA welcomed a team of ten Salesforce staff members recently who worked hard on a three hour shift "working bee". We removed about 2500 polygala, (my conservative estimate of 1 plant per 2 square metres) from about 5000 sq.metres at the eastern end of Red Bluff (refer map above) We also did three rounds of watering of the 205 seedlings planted at the Friends of Mills Beach working bee on Monday. We collected one large bag of litter and submitted two Snap-Send-Solves (broken Casuarina limb hanging over the path and littered area above the cliff face). We are so very grateful for their help and also their refreshments! Coordinator Martin Lenard





Naturelinks work for Friends of the Beleura Cliff Path 30-06-22

Naturelinks workers *Ben Hall Pike and Darcy Holmes* planted 118 seedlings



The photo shows Ben and Darcy working on the flat mini-foreshore area at Mills Beach East-East, which we planted out in March and April this year. It has been inaccessible for two months after heavy storms washed away all the sand at the end of Mills Beach, leaving only rocks.

The storms also washed away some, but not all, of the seedlings we had planted along the beach edge.

These Banksias, Boobiallas and Attriplex (Salt bush) were planted to protect this very edge of the foreshore, which is being eroded away bit by bit each year. Ben and Darcy replanted, and fixed the plant guards. Once established we hope the plants will resist the erosion by the sea.



The tiny Attriplex seedlings from our greenhouses, planted right in the sand, have nearly all survived. You can see an existing much older Attriplex shrub-sized plant just behind Ben, in the yellow jacket. The Sheoak seedlings further inland on the foreshore are doing really well, some quadrupling their size. In thirty years this will be a treed area, with Banksias, Boobiallas and (further up the slope) Sheoaks, with the middle and ground layers of indigenous plants, some already existing there, others planted by us.

Photo: Attriplex cinerea (Grey Saltbush). I wrongly identified it as Olearia last newsletter. The photo is from the website of Edibleoz. Yes! It's edible! And Edibleoz.com.au is a fascinating source of information. Edible doesn't mean delicious, but we haven't tried the flowers yet. The indigenous bees and birds like them.

Friends of Beleura Cliff Path Report continued....



Further up the slope they planted Small Pigface (*photo left*), also known as Rounded Noon-flower (scientific name - *Disphyma crassifolium*). This ultra-hardy succulent is attractive, edible, and has been holding together exposed areas of this cliff for thousands of years.

Photo Right. Ben and Darcy are planting *Disphyma*, along with another succulent *Threlkeldia diffusa*, and two tough grasses that do well in exposed areas of the cliff:

Stipa elegantissima and an un-named local wallaby grass, possibly *Setacea*.
Photo bottom right: *Stipa elegantissima* with its beautiful fluffy cover of seeds, growing near the Blue Gate. It is said this *Stipa* become established here when seeds were blown across the bay from the Wimmera in dust-storms last century.
Peter Nicholson



Ben and Darcy planted 118 seedlings, including replacement of seedlings (*Banksias*) that had died or were swept away by storm-waves, and repaired damaged plant-guards. They weeded and tended other healthy seedlings on the foreshore area below the middle of the path (Mills Beach East-East) and planted *Sheoaks*, *Tea-tree*, succulents and grasses near the Hump Bridge.



The Friends of the Beleura Cliff Path receives grants from **DELWP** (Victorian Government Dept. of Environment), through Landcare, Coastcare and the Port Phillip Bay Fund. These grants are hard to win, and many volunteer groups apply. The grants are awarded on carefully thought-out ecological principles. To win a grant you need a strong ecological plan, and a large team of dedicated volunteers prepared to work regularly. We get help in various forms from the Mornington Peninsula Shire including recently a grant under their Biolinks program. The Mornington Environment Association helps us with moral support, insurance, and in their role as our auspice in grant applications. The Friends group uses resources from their organizer Peter Nicholson's indigenous garden on the Cliff Path, which is their work-base. We sometimes get donations from locals, and are given water for irrigation and hand watering by the Tilbrook, Liberman, Nicholson and Mangan families. Thank you to all these people. Coordinator Peter Nicholson

Community interest and persistence paid off for rivers

MEA heard that the Victorian Government was preparing a new Sustainable Water Strategy (SWS) for southern Victoria with little community involvement. As the SWS sets the framework for water management for the next decade and beyond, we knew it was important to ensure the community had a strong say in its development."

Environmental Justice Australia saw an opportunity to help coordinate local environmental groups to influence this important policy-setting tool. Before the Strategy was quietly done and dusted we ran consultations to build a coordinated community voice. Now the opportunity exists to achieve the strongest possible strategy to benefit the environment and communities.

Information provided to Marty Lenard

Environment Victoria v Environment Justice

In March, the Victorian Environment Protection Authority (EPA) issued pollution licenses for three of the largest Australian coal-burning power stations in the Latrobe Valley, allowing them to continue releasing harmful and dangerous levels of pollution at the expense of the community.

In response, Environment Victoria, is taking the EPA to court, and the owners of the three power stations.

The landmark case is **going to Court in October 2022**. It will be the first test of Victoria's Climate Change Act (2017), and the first case to challenge the regulation of air pollution from Victoria's coal-burning power stations.

Contact Us:

- www.morningtonenviro.org.au
- morningtonea@gmail.com
- **PO Box 580 Mornington 3931**
- **Monthly meetings**
7:00PM 2nd Wednesday Feb. – Dec.

President:

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Friends of Beleura Cliff Path :

Peter Nicholson 0400 326 306
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MEA appreciates help and support

Volunteers meet to work and care for the following areas:
see left side of this page for contact details:

Tanti Creek 9:30—11:30 Last Tuesday of the month contact Martin

Mills Beach 9:30—11:30 3rd Sun or Mon of the month contact Brian

Beleura Cliff Path 9:30—11:30 varied sessions contact Peter Nicholson

Fishermen's Beach 9:00-11:00 last Thur of month contact Peter Deerson



You too can be involved

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

Fees are: Family \$15; Single \$10

Email— morningtonea@gmail.com
Please include your contact number.