

PRESIDENT'S REPORT MCCRAE HOMESTEAD COASTAL GROUP AGM 4th December 2019

Welcome to the 22nd AGM of our Association, marking 22 years that we have been working to restore the McCrae foreshore from damage done over many years of camping in what is now, thanks to Parks Victoria's vision over 20 years ago, a Conservation Zone.

Once again we have had an active year of works on the foreshore, with several grant applications being successful, keeping us and Naturelinks busy.

At the start of the year in preparation for planting later in the year we spread several truck loads of mulch mainly east of the beach car park. In May we planted the first of over 500 plants, with our last planting in October.

All plantings were east of the Rotunda and included Banksias, She oaks, Boobialla, and grasses including poas, microlinas, and lomandras all indigenous to the area. We watered the plants and installed Plant guards, most of which have remained- although there have been several plants and tree guards pulled out.

At our last AGM I reported on the eight old groynes installed between 1988-1991 in a failed attempt to save a Lifesaving Clubhouse built in the 1960s between the bay trail and the sand line.



October 1991
Derelict McCrae Lifesaving Clubhouse

By the late 1980s the LSC was under wave attack, and eventually collapsed into the sea despite the groynes and massive rock boulders dumped on the shoreline to “save” the building and car park.

The clubhouse remains were removed in 1995 but the useless groynes remained a hazard and eyesore. In the early 2000s, the then Rosebud Foreshore Committee and its successor Parks Victoria, advised the groynes were a failed experiment so would not be maintained and would eventually be removed. PV by then was the manager of the entire Rosebud Foreshore Reserve.

As the groynes decayed, the beach has naturally repaired itself. Since 2005 it has remained largely in dynamic equilibrium throughout the seasons.



2005

Club house and half car park removed and beach re-establishing

By 2018 there was a 27 metre wide stable beach at McCrae. See below images from 2017-2018



Wide McCrae beach looking west towards old groynes
18th November 2018



McCrae beach - 1st February 2018 before new groynes
Mid tide

In August 2018 PPCC wrote to DELWP, pointing out the useless state of the groynes and suggesting it was time to finally remove them.

So it was a shock when DELWP put up a sign in late 2018 advising that works would be starting to replace the old groynes with taller and longer ones – without any prior advice to PPCC or MHCG.

Work started a few days after the sign went up and the 6 new groynes were completed by Feb/March 2019. In my opinion they have greatly diminished the visual amenity of the beach and shallows.



McCrae beach with new groynes 31st March 2019 mid tide

It's no longer possible to walk unimpeded along the shoreline as the groynes are tall enough that walkers have to hurdle them, or trudge up the beach to get around the landward end of them, which could also be causing damage from increased foot traffic around the end of the groyne.

A consultants report since obtained from DELWP conceded that the old groynes were not contributing to the wide and stable condition of the beach for over 20 years, however inexplicably the report attempted to justify spending over \$200,000 to make the beach 3 metres wider.

As far as I can tell, the beach doesn't look any wider, and may be narrower in some spots as groynes naturally accumulate sand on one side and deplete it on the other.

The following 2 slides are taken near the most westerly groyne and show the difference in beach width on either side of it.



Most westerly groyne has build up of sand on western side and depletion on eastern side
1st December 2019



Looking west past most westerly groyne to wide beach
1st December 2019

The sand may be deeper in some parts of the beach (i.e. some groynes don't appear to be quite as tall as they first did) – but a deeper beach was not the stated aim of the project..... DELWP was wanting - and the consultant's report predicted - a wider beach, not a deeper beach.



Looking east from most westerly groyne to narrower beach. 1st December 2019

The new groynes have also been ineffectual in saving the beach car park from wave attack, as winter storms have caused erosion of the dune immediately in front of it



Narrow beach, big groyne 12th July 2019 mid tide

Eventually a load of rocks was dumped in front of the car park to save the bitumen from being undermined – although we are not sure by whom. Likewise the piecemeal attempt at planting a couple of She oaks and grasses near the rocks.



Looking East. Despite new groynes, more rocks arrive to protect McCrae beach car park 12th July 2019 - Low tide



Looking east just east of car park. 3rd December 2019. Remains of old groyne exposed for first time. No beach to east of car park now.

A piece of an old groyne from 1990 has just re-emerged presumably due to lack of sand arriving from the west as would normally occur. That sand is now trapped on a very wide beach in front of the Yacht Club.

Grants, Working bees and other activities

During 2019, works have been funded by a number of grants which Margaret and Jenny have successfully submitted. Successful grants include: Melbourne Water; Coast Care, a small PPWCMA Admin Support Grant and a larger Port Phillip Bay Fund grant which we are administering and sharing with 2 other groups - FoRBF and Friends of Chinaman's Creek.

Our Membership is currently 20, down from 26 last year, and attendance numbers at working bees has dropped slightly, with the highest being 12 on two days and the lowest 5 on three days. This year we have worked 22 days for a total of 340 hours, compared with 388 hours (21 days) last year.

Nature Links continues to oversee our working bees under the meticulous guidance of Danielle Suffern and her team – especially including Emily Sharp. Danielle is also a wonderful support to us when we prepare grant applications, preparing plant lists and quotes for estimated work hours, liaising with the Shire, MW etc.

Once again during the year Dee and Barry Robinson have provided post working bee lunch for us on 19 occasions at their home. As per last year's report, I have added 40 hours to our working bee hours for Dee's catering efforts, to make a total of 380 hours of volunteer work to support McCrae foreshore.

Dee and Barry also hosted our Xmas party and Danielle's 40th on the 14th April. So- on behalf of the club, I thank you both once again for the many years of support and companionship.

Eyrie Creek

As well as their successful grant applications; for the last couple of years Margaret and Jenny have been applying for funds to restore the banks of Eyrie Creek.



31st August 2019

A prominent eyesore on our foreshore - delivering sediments and pollutants to the Bay. Funding sorely needed to rehabilitate it.



5th September 2019

Melbourne Water declined our Eyrie Creek application last year and is still considering our second try with them for this year's round of funding. This year we emphasised to MW the creek's diminished water quality delivering pollutants to the Bay detracting from the successful works in Coburn Creek funded by MW.

We also made a submission to the CBA earlier in the year when it announced the closure of its Dromana Branch. Following our complaints (Len and Jenny) the Branch Manager offered to accept requests for funding of community projects. We submitted a detailed submission for the restoration of Eyrie Creek as it is such a prominent feature of the foreshore when approaching and leaving Dromana. We were unsuccessful.

Following a recent suggestion from Hannah Brown – the Volunteers' co-coordinator for the Shire - we recently submitted an application to the 2020-2021 MPS Budget process for funding the sorely needed restoration of the Eyrie Creek section of foreshore.

We made the point that the Shire spent a lot of money restoring the landward side of Eyrie Creek and adjacent 'Eyrie Steps' public walkway but once the creek crosses under Pt. Nepean Rd and emerges onto the foreshore it becomes a stagnant weed infested eyesore. We are yet to hear the outcome of that submission.

Committee

Margaret Wilson as our secretary, with her usual efficiency, manages newsletter production, letter writing, pamphlets, our website and the numerous responsibilities of a secretary. This year she and Jenny have worked together on grant applications. Thank you Margaret.

You will remember at last year's meeting Jenny took on the Treasurer's role and has been very thankful for the assistance Margaret has given her during the year.

Margaret and Jenny are both very capable and have handled our affairs with great efficiency.

Thanks also to Graeme Rose and Barry and Dee for their contributions to the committee's deliberations.

As always thank you to all the committee for your support, and I thank all the membership for your continued dedication to our special piece of the coastline.

Now Jenny will present a short slideshow of some of our recent works and changes over time.

After that our Guest speaker – Dr. Mark Fancett from the Peninsula Preservation Group/Save Arthurs Seat