



# Marine Care Ricketts Point

## NEWSLETTER

[www.marinecare.org.au](http://www.marinecare.org.au)

Issue No 80

March to May 2021

### A Note from the President

#### Folks

While the snorkelling season has come to an end for this year, there has still been plenty going on in terms of our monthly Beach Patrols, Sea Searches with Parks Victoria, and bi-monthly speakers' events.

We do hope you enjoy this newsletter covering what has been happening over the past few months within MCRP as well as related topics of interest.

As we go to print, I'd like to personally highlight the importance of *having your say* to protect fast disappearing trees in Bayside. **Comments Close on Bayside Council's Urban Forest Strategy on 23 May 2021.** Please make comments at <https://yoursay.bayside.vic.gov.au/planting-protecting-trees>.

And in case you were not aware, **World Turtle Day** is also just around the corner.



On **23 May** for the last 20 years, turtle lovers everywhere emerge to honour these shelled reptiles that have roamed the Earth for more than 200 million years. The over 350 known species of turtles alive today are found on every continent, except Antarctica. Despite their wide distribution, most turtles are endangered due to loss of habitat, illegal wildlife trade, hunting, and fishing. World Turtle Day aims to change that by raising awareness about their plight and encouraging conservation efforts. So this Sunday, we invite you to stick your neck out for turtles.

We are always interested in feedback on how to improve our newsletter. Please write to me or to Cindy Wild (E [ckwild7@gmail.com](mailto:ckwild7@gmail.com)), who is now assisting us to generate the monthly newsletter with any feedback, stories, general information of interest, and photos you would like to share in a future edition.

Kind regards,

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## Recent Events

### Wetsuits for Westernport Day- 6th March

As part of the 6 March snorkel at Teahouse Reef, our snorkel group participated in the **Wetsuits for Westernport Day**.

Westernport Bay is a delicate Ramsar listed wetlands site renowned for its unique diversity of marine life.

Groups around Victoria were called on to show their support for the campaign against the building of an AGL gas plant at Westernport Bay by posting a photo on their Facebook page. This photo is posted on our Facebook page.



The campaign ultimately resulted in denial of AGL's request by the Minister of the Environment, based in part on [advocacy by groups like Marine Care Ricketts Point](#).

### Special event – Seaweek Webinar – 25 March

Dr Brian Von Herzen of Climate Foundation ([climatefoundation.org](http://climatefoundation.org)) spoke via Zoom on marine permaculture and its current application here in Australia regenerating Tasmania's devastated east coast kelp forests. This project is also captured in the documentary, *2040*.

Those attending also heard from Professor Peter McCready of Deakin's Blue Carbon Lab ([bluecarbonlab.org/](http://bluecarbonlab.org/)). This was a fascinating talk too about Blue Carbon sequestration in marine wetlands – yet another reminder of why protecting the wetlands in areas like Westernport Bay and generating new wetlands like those mentioned in Topics of Interest is important to the environment.

### AGM – 15 April 2021

We had an excellent turnout of members, our first in-person general and speaker evening, on 15 April at the Seniors Centre, Beaumaris. We all socially-distanced and brought our own mugs/glasses for Covid safety reasons.

Andrew Christie of Pt Cook Marine Sanctuary spoke about the rays and sharks in the northern part of Port Phillip Bay. His talk was accompanied by lots of video and was well received by the audience. His presentation was emailed to all members.



## SeaSearch with Parks Vic – 18 April 2021

Fortunately, Parks Victoria have resumed their quarterly Sea Searches on our Ricketts Point unique rock shelves.

Thanks to all those who came along and enjoyed a beautiful sunny Sunday afternoon. As Park Victoria rangers observed, many hands make light work.



Some of the many volunteers who turned up at Sea Search. Parks Victoria rangers 'bookend' the volunteers in this photo.



Our citizen science coordinator Nicole with her gorgeous son at PV's April SeaSearch

## MCRP General Items of Business

### Committee of Management – 2021

The following people were elected to the Committee of Management.

**President** Elizabeth Jensen

**Treasurer** Fiona Dick

**Secretary** Anna Daniels

**Membership Officer** Alison Horton

**Other committee members:** Greg Mier, Val Royale, Ian O'Loughlin

### Future Speakers at MCRP Forums

We hold 6 speakers nights a year – on the first Thursday of the even months. The Committee has decided to hold our 3 'summer' meetings (February, April, and December) in person, and our 3 'winter' meetings (June, August, October) by Zoom.

We are keen to hear from you about any speakers you think would be good. Broad areas of interest are marine, environmental and climate change topics. Please email your suggestions, preferably with contact details, to Ian O'Loughlin ([ianoloughlin@optusnet.com.au](mailto:ianoloughlin@optusnet.com.au).)

## TOPICS OF INTEREST

### Sea Urchins and Barrens in Ricketts Point Marine Sanctuary

This was a concerning topic and question to Parks Victoria at the AGM following reports by MCRP members of increasing urchin numbers.

Parks Victoria have surveyed the urchin barrens appearing in the Ricketts Point Sanctuary. At this point they need to be culled and we expect to hear from Parks Victoria soon on their strategy and how MCRP might be able to assist their efforts.

For those unfamiliar with the consequences of an overabundance of sea urchins, they start to consume all marine vegetation, and create sea 'deserts' or barrens.

This was obvious on a recent visit to the Beaumaris Sea Scouts pier where you can both see the increasing population and the resulting barren.



Above is a sea urchin in proportion and harmony with the rest of the marine ecosystem.

Photo of an urchin and sea slug by Toni Roberts.

### Blue carbon – the forgotten answer to assisting mitigate climate change



A first report from UNESCO on measuring blue carbon in its world-listed marine areas shows that *three Australian sites* – the Great Barrier Reef in Queensland, Shark Bay and the Ningaloo coast in Western Australia – *store almost 40% of the blue carbon in all world heritage sites.*

The Greenhouse gas stored in Australia's marine world heritage sites are about the same as four years of emissions.

But many marine sites around the world are under threat from development.

Read more here from the Guardian. [Blue carbon: how three Australian marine sites lock away 2bn tonnes of CO2](#)

### Rising amount of Plastics in Yarra and Maribyrnong Rivers

An alarming amount of *additional plastics* – an estimated 2.5 billion pieces of litter – are spilling into Port Phillip Bay in 2021 according to research conducted by the Port Phillip EcoCentre. This was double the amount of 2018. In both rivers, the vast bulk of the litter caught consisted of hard plastic remnants of broken-up plastic items, followed by polystyrene and soft plastics.

See further details here: <https://www.theage.com.au/national/victoria/rising-rivers-of-plastic-polluting-port-philip-bay-20210301-p576qq.html>

## **Degraded blue gum plantation transformed back into natural wetland in South West Victoria**

Read the inspiring story of how local NGO's transformed a degraded agricultural area back into its former wetlands, and in the process returned many native trees, birds, fish, frogs and platypus to the area.

Follow this link to learn more: <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-02-07/walker-swamp-blue-gum-plantation-transformed-back-to-wetlands/13110128>

**For MCRP Consideration:** This is the sort of thing we could do with Bayside Council's Elsternwick Park and with expanded Marine Sanctuaries in Port Phillip Bay.

## **Stormwater Turned into a wetland area in Pinnaroo in the Mallee**

A similar project has been undertaken in Pinnaroo, near the Mallee/South Australian border, where stormwater areas have been transformed into a wonderful wetland.

See <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-06-15/town-backyard-blitz-turns-stormwater-drain-into-tranquil-wetland/12335650>

**Again,** this is the sort of thing Bayside Council could look at doing with its stormwater, instead of stormwater pipes simply going straight into the Bay, causing Bay pollution because of the amount and type of runoff.

## **Algae-covered degraded wetland in Perth turned into a bird sanctuary**

It doesn't have to be a large amount of land to create effective habitat protection for native wildlife. See at this link what was achieved in Perth. <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-05-06/from-algal-covered-swamp-to-thriving-wetland-in-perth/9712284>

In the same way as other areas in Victoria have looked at what's in their area and rehabilitated it, we need to ensure that Bayside Council makes greater use of degraded land, stormwater and other open resources under their Climate Emergency Action Plan to increase the habitat for wildlife and water to provide better support for our native land and water animals and birds.

## **Boosting Australian Renewable Jobs**

Beyond Zero Emissions (BZE) focusses on reducing greenhouse gas emissions and supporting Australian industry to become carbon neutral.

Recently the federal government released a 10-year roadmap to lift Australia's domestic critical minerals processing capacity. Rare earths are critical for manufacturing wind turbines, electric vehicles and other advanced technologies. It's a big win for renewables-manufacturing in Australia and follows extensive work by BZE with government last year.

The Million Jobs Plan showed manufacturing for the zero-emissions economy, including renewable hydrogen, ammonia, green steel, aluminium and other metals, could create more than 200,000 Australian jobs in the next five years. The impact of COVID-19 on international supply chains has also reminded Australia that domestic manufacturing capacity is a critical component of national resilience.

BZE has a video here Watch our video to show how industrial regions of Australia such as the Hunter in NSW are innovating through clean technology.

*Marine Care Ricketts Point acknowledges the Boon wurrung people as the Traditional Owners and custodians of the waters and lands around Ricketts Point. We pay our respects to their Elders, past, present and emerging.*