



Coastcare
Victoria

Coastline

Celebrating Coastcare Victoria

2021

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Celebrating Coastcare Victoria

This special edition of the Coastcare Victoria newsletter has been published to celebrate the achievements of the Coastcare Victoria community over the last 27 years and the launch of our new strategy. The newsletter looks back on Coastcare Victoria projects and includes selected stories and photos from volunteers about their accomplishments and highlights awards our volunteers have received over the years. The Coastcare Victoria team, past and present have reflected on their time supporting volunteers. From the articles in the newsletter, it's easy to see how Coastcarers inspire others in the community to become coastal champions.





Aboriginal acknowledgement

Coastcare Victoria acknowledge and respect Victorian Traditional Owners as the original custodians of Victoria's land and waters, their unique ability to care for Country and deep spiritual connection to it. We honour Elders past and present whose knowledge and wisdom has ensured the continuation of culture and traditional practices.

We are committed to genuinely partner, and meaningfully engage, with Victoria's Traditional Owners and Aboriginal communities to support the protection of Sea Country, the maintenance of spiritual and cultural practices and their broader aspirations in the 21st century and beyond.

Throughout this document, Aboriginal is used to refer to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.



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Celebrating Coastcare Victoria

Wow, what a milestone we achieved together — Coastcare Victoria is still going strong in it's 27th year! Launched in 1994, the Coastcare Victoria program was the first of its kind in Australia. From humble beginnings, we are today working with a network of approximately 250 community groups and organisations.

The Coastcare Victoria community is made up of thousands of passionate, knowledgeable and experienced people. Coronavirus (COVID-19) has challenged the way the Coastcare Victoria community works but the strength and resilience of our groups has enabled them to adapt their practices. We would like to thank everyone's efforts to deliver the Coastcare Victoria program during this very challenging time — your collective efforts are greatly appreciated and are contributing to outstanding outcomes for the Victorian coast.

Our reflection of the 25th anniversary of Coastcare Victoria sums up the spirit of our volunteers.

For the 25th anniversary of the Coastcare Victoria program, the Coastcare Victoria team held celebrations at Jan Juc and Inverloch to highlight the achievements that volunteers have made over the years. On a warm and sunny afternoon at Inverloch, we heard about the amazing achievements of volunteers in the Gippsland region and we farewelled one of our longest serving Coastcare Victoria facilitators Bruce Atkin.

Meanwhile, on a rainy and windy afternoon on the Surf Coast, we had the pleasure of hearing from Jan Juc Coast Action's founders Roma and Ian Edwards. The pair told us how they set out 25 years earlier to restore the Bells Beach Coastal Reserve to a pristine coastal heathland. It was inspirational to see the results of the group's hard work over all those years. The rain and wind had not deterred them from having a working bee earlier in the day.

The Coastcare Victoria team continues to be humbled and inspired by you, the powerhouse of volunteers and community organisations we work with. Coastcare Victoria is privileged to support you as you give your time, skills and knowledge to improving Victoria's coast for the whole community. We want to thank every one of you for your efforts and dedication.



Farewell retirement for Coastcare Victoria Facilitator, Bruce Atkin. Pictured left to right Alison Oats, Bruce Atkin and Neville Rosengren



Ian and Roma Edwards, original (and ongoing) members of Jan Juc Coast Action, holding before and after photos of the improvements the group has made to coastal vegetation

We hope you enjoy the newsletter – thank you to everyone who contributed their memories and photos to help celebrate!

The Coastcare Victoria team

A new strategy for Coastcare Victoria

Coastcare Victoria has just launched a new strategy for 2021-2026 to guide the direction of the program. The strategy was developed through extensive engagement with the community, and we would like to thank everyone who provided input and feedback.

The strategy focuses on three 'Strategic Pillars':

- 1. Marine and Coastal Stewardship**
- 2. Thriving Community Groups and Networks**
- 3. Victorians Valuing the Coast**

The Coastcare Victoria team has already started implementing the goals and actions in the strategy and looks forward to continuing to work with the community to deliver its priorities. You can download the strategy from marineandcoasts.vic.gov.au/coastcare to see Coastcare Victoria's plans for the next five years and learn about the program in detail.



● **Strategic Pillar 1. Marine and Coastal Stewardship**

Community organisations and Coastcare Victoria volunteers deliver protection and rehabilitation of marine and coastal environments and make contributions to science and research. In this area, the Coastcare Victoria program will focus on providing grant funding in alignment with key state priorities, connect communities with citizen science opportunities and seek opportunities to support Traditional Owner aspirations. The program will seek to align community efforts with state and regional policies and priorities and conduct monitoring, evaluation and reporting to demonstrate how Coastcare Victoria contributes to their implementation.



● **Strategic Pillar 2. Thriving Community Groups and Networks**

The Coastcare Victoria program's primary role is to assist and support communities with the work they do. The program will respond to the changing nature of volunteerism to support groups now and in the future through a team of Coastcare Victoria facilitators. The program will provide capacity building opportunities, spaces to convene, and support to strategically plan, expand and diversify volunteer bases. The program will work to simplify and streamline administration requirements, support volunteers to work safely and ensure the work of Coastcare Victoria volunteers is celebrated and their effort recognised.



● **Strategic Pillar 3. Victorians Valuing the Coast**

With specialised local knowledge, experience and enthusiasm, the Coastcare Victoria community is perfectly placed to engage, educate and involve the broader community in the marine and coastal environment. Coastcare Victoria will continue to include and inspire people from all walks of life to value and care for the coast through community grants projects, the Summer by the Sea program and other initiatives.



Coastline from years gone by

Over the years, Coastline (Coastcare Victoria's newsletter), has showcased impressive community and volunteer projects.

The first issue of Coastline was published in the summer of 1994/1995 to share stories of Coast Action volunteers and community groups. Coastline provided a platform to highlight projects, recognise achievements and keep Coastcare Victoria networks connected.

Coastline articles can now be found within the pages of the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning's (DELWP) quarterly Marine and Coasts newsletter. Stories are welcome at any time – please send them to coastcare.victoria@delwp.vic.gov.au

Join us to take a trip down memory lane....





Our passionate volunteers share their stories

Today's Coastcare Victoria volunteers are involved in diverse activities and technologies and play major roles in engaging and educating the public about marine and coastal issues. We put a call out to our volunteers to submit their stories and photos about their marine and coastal volunteering work in Victoria.

Read some fabulous stories from current Coastcare Victoria volunteer and community groups and see what they have been up to!

Friends of Beware Reef

By Don Love

Off the coast of Cape Conran in East Gippsland lies Beware Reef Marine Sanctuary - a 220-hectare wonderland of marine life and habitat.

From our formal inception in 2005 under the guidance of Mike Irvine, dozens of passionate people have contributed to making our group flourish. For over 15 years, our group of 10 active members has built a reputation as a reliable and prolific contributor to the environmental and scientific community. Until recently, our volunteers could often be found diving in the sanctuary and conducting underwater surveys of marine life. Usually diving on a weekly basis, this has been made quite challenging in 2020 due to bushfires as well as coronavirus (COVID-19).

Friends of Beware Reef have been involved in many community projects throughout the years, always aiming to enhance the public's awareness and knowledge of marine environments. Projects have included informative fact sheet poster series: 'Invertebrates of Beware Reef Marine Sanctuary', 'Eye Spy - the East Gippsland Coast', heritage posters identifying shipwreck locations, 'Fish of Beware Reef Marine Sanctuary', interpretive signage and citizen science research projects. The group has also published 'Beware Reef Marine Sanctuary' and 'Port Phillip Heads Marine National Park' identification booklets as well as a 'Beware Reef Marine Sanctuary - Diver Guide'.

The group used a Coastcare Victoria grant received in 2019 to buy a new waterproof camera. This has improved the quality of our photographs and videos which are used to identify species and shared with research institutions. As a group, we are lucky to have a member that can put videos together with ease. It's amazing to see what macro photography can highlight - especially with the marine invertebrates. The great reward for us is to see the database we

have accumulated both photographically and scientifically over a long period of time, aid in the identification of marine life data collection trends.

Not all of our work is underwater - we also take great pleasure in educating the community, from children through to the elderly. It's important to educate the locals, tourists and the wider public about what there is to see under the waters both off our coast and inland within the Gippsland Lakes.

Our group spends countless hours, unseen below the surface of the water, in a totally alien world from the terrestrial one that humans traditionally inhabit. But for the Friends of Beware Reef, this is our 'home', our place for volunteering. We hope you enjoy the fruits of some of our labours in partnership with Coastcare Victoria and Parks Victoria. Please contact us via our Facebook page if you would like to become involved.



Volunteer members, Friends of Beware Reef

Victoria Wader Study Group

By Penny Johns

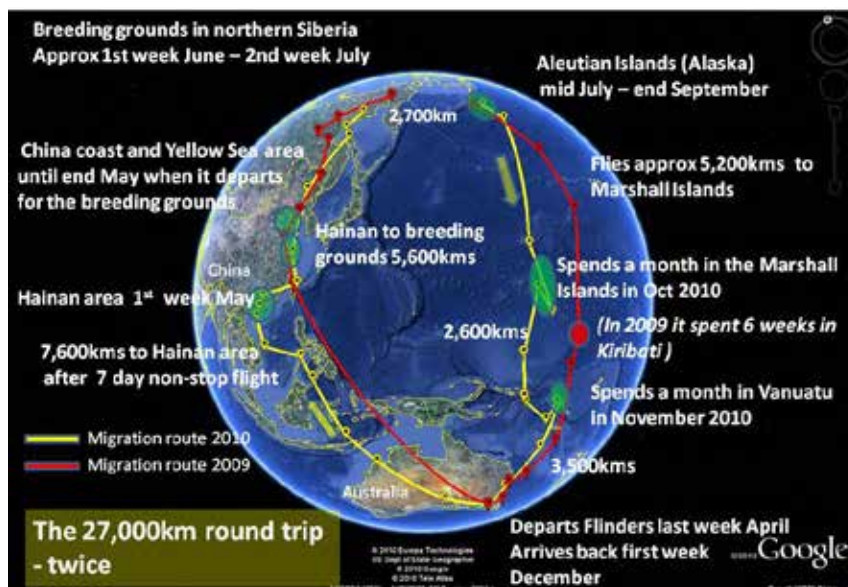
The Victorian Wader Study Group (VWSG) was founded over 40 years ago by the indefatigable late Dr. Clive Minton AM. Clive, a world authority on shorebirds (waders), continues to inspire the VWSG to go on with the work he initiated.

The VWSG monitors new technologies that might assist with wader research. The exponential growth of technology has meant that we have been able to gather more information about waders, where they migrate to, which route they take in the flyway to their northern hemisphere breeding sites and, with more sophisticated analysis, their nesting and breeding success.

This has been made possible with the use of geolocators, a very small light sensitive device that periodically records ambient light level to determine location. Geolocators were first deployed by the VWSG on Ruddy Turnstones at Flinders in Victoria.

The devices need to be retrieved to be downloaded. Due to their site fidelity, there was a good chance of retrieving the data logger when the turnstones returned the following spring. An exciting finding from our first deployment was to discover that the bird migrated north through Asia and then for its southern route it turned east, spent five weeks in the Aleutian Islands, south west of Alaska, and returned to Victoria via Kiribati in the Pacific Ocean.

The following season it was again fitted with a geocator repeating the same migratory route. Our major research on Ruddy Turnstones is now carried out on King Island Tasmania in collaboration with Professor Marcell Klaassen at Deakin



Victorian Wader Study Group wader migration mapping

University. The development of these data loggers, fitting on a normal leg flag and weight less than one gram (g), has enabled their deployment on Curlew Sandpipers and birds as small as a Red-necked Stint (32g) with encouraging results.

Some of our waders have reached a great age and travelled great distances, including a Bar-tailed Godwit seen at Corner Inlet by Jonathon Stevenson in September 2017. It was first banded near Queenscliff in November 2004 as a two year old. At the time of resighting it was 15 years old. Two Ruddy Turnstones at Flinders are 16 and 17 years old respectively, one of which has returned every year since it was first flagged in 2003. The oldest Pied Oystercatcher seen by Steve Johnson in October 2017 is 31 years old. A Caspian tern recovered near Brisbane in 2017 had been banded at Corner Inlet in February 1989.

Our banding of Crested, Caspian, Common and Fairy Terns continues at Corner Inlet, Mud Islands and Phillip Island.

The Coastcare Victoria grants that we have received have greatly facilitated our research, together with the dedicated support of an active volunteer group of citizen and professional scientists. We are a friendly passionate group and welcome new members — please contact us on chairvws@gmail.com.



I feel privileged that coming to work every day, I still feel that same level of excitement three years later that I felt at the beginning. I love working with volunteers that share my passion for the environment. I take great pride in encouraging and supporting them in any way that I can to achieve their goals of protecting our coastal and marine environments for future generations. The work they do is so vital and to be able to aid that in any way feels pretty special. Volunteers make my job the best job there is! Each day is so uniquely different and I look forward to challenging myself to learn more and more as time goes on.

Bethany Hunting, Coastcare Victoria Facilitator, East Gippsland

Rhyll Coast Action Group

By Gabrielle Mahony

Twenty-three years ago, members of the Rhyll community who were concerned about the degradation of the coastline took action that led to the establishment of Rhyll Coast Action Group. Rhyll Coast Action exists to foster direct community involvement in the care and management of the Rhyll foreshore from McIlwraith Road to the bottom of Hastings Street.

Formed in 1998 by a group of residents with a wealth of experience and knowledge in sourcing and propagating seed, recognising weeds/plants and writing submissions, their sheer hard work and commitment made for a strong movement. Since then, their work has transformed the previously degraded northern coastline by clearing away voluminous amounts of gorse and other weeds, and revegetating the area with indigenous flora.

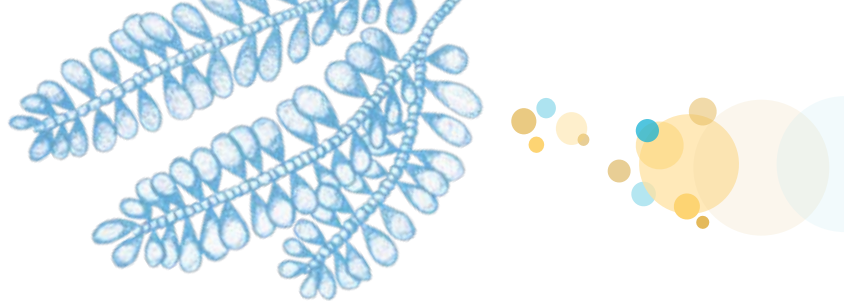
Together with Phillip Island Nature Park and others, Rhyll Coast Action planned the rejuvenation of the coastline from McIlwraith Road to Hastings Street. Meeting monthly, the group identified funding opportunities, sourced seed and undertook the mammoth task of clearing gorse and other weeds.

Thanks to their dedicated and energetic work, the northern coastline has been transformed and replanting has successfully restored a more balanced environment. Maintenance weeding is ongoing, and some replanting continues to implement the original plans for this area. Along the way, a new influx of volunteers began to focus on clearing environmental weeds from the southern side of the coast, with working bees being held in the cooler months.

Five of the original members are still active and present at most working bees. We would love new members to continue the group's vital work of conserving and enhancing the coastline environment; please contact us today at rhyllcoastaction@gmail.com.



Rhyll Coast Action Volunteers undertaking revegetation work



Clifton Springs Curlewis Coastcare Group

By Naomi Wells

Adorned with stunning waters, sandy beaches and iconic views of the You Yangs, the Clifton Springs Curlewis area is a hidden gem on the Bellarine Peninsula. A group of passionate locals with a range of interests have been inspired to protect these beautiful natural assets and have formed the new Clifton Springs Curlewis Coastcare Group.

Julia Reid, president, would like to acknowledge 'for Wadawurrung People, Clifton Springs was a special place, and a favourite home during winter because of its rich abundant wildlife, fresh clean springs for drinking and the shelter it provided from the icy Southern Ocean Winter blasts'.

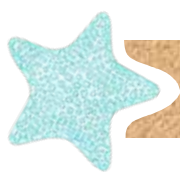
Sharyn Dunstan, the interim Secretary, is passionate about the area because of the 'great views, clean air, beaches that are not crowded, very quiet. The variety of native birds is extensive and the local community are caring and friendly with a positive outlook on life.'

Since joining, Julia has found fabulous new groups and resources online including Facebook. Working closely with a team of passionate locals, Julia said she 'feels more focussed and supported as I now have a network of people from whom to learn, draw support and contribute to'. No matter your experience, volunteers are bound to gain new skills or gain a new outlook on life through their contribution.



Bellarine Catchment Network staff Naomi and Matt, promoting the new group at the Clifton Springs boat ramp (image taken by Rebecca Adam/ Bellarine Times)

It's never too late to start a Coastcare group. Local communities can always benefit from more volunteer groups like the Clifton Springs Curlewis Coastcare group who want to protect, preserve, and regenerate the wonderful life, land and marine environment that is Clifton Springs-Curlewis and the Northern Bellarine. We are always happy to welcome new members; please contact us on cscecoastcare@gmail.com.



Friends of Point Addis and the Ironbark Basin

By Gail Slykhuis

The Friends of Point Addis (FoPA) and the Ironbark Basin Group formed in 2002, in direct response to the gazetted 4,600 hectare Point Addis Marine National Park.

As the land and sea managers of the area, and with the guidance of Parks Victoria, Friends of Point Addis continue to work on the following projects: minimising the spread of *Phytophthora dieback*, weed eradication, revegetation of degraded sites, sea search, the Junior Ranger program, Hooded Plover monitoring and Clean Up Australia Day.



*Participants in FoPA's Fightback Dieback Workshop held in the Ironbark Basin. Prevention of the spread of *Phytophthora Dieback* was the focus of the workshop*

Ocean Grove Coastcare

By Margot Busch

Over 10 years and going strong! Ocean Grove Coastcare came into being in 2010 with a small group of enthusiastic women who were keen to see the precious coastal environment of the town protected and enhanced. The initial focus of the group was on-ground works in the foreshore, dune and estuary areas of Ocean Grove. These works included weed removal, revegetation works and litter collection. As a result, the density and extent of weed infestations in the coastal areas of Ocean Grove have been significantly reduced. The success of these weed management and revegetation programs enabled Ocean Grove Coastcare to expand its geographical focus and increase the diversity of projects undertaken and place a greater emphasis upon community engagement and education.



National Tree Day crowd, happy with the 400 indigenous seedlings they planted in the Ocean Grove dunes

A major success for Ocean Grove Coastcare has been the ability to develop strong, collaborative and cooperative relationships with local land and environmental managers. Two recent collaborations with agencies and organisations have resulted in the delivery of an Ocean Grove 'Garden for Wildlife' program, which involved the provision of advice and plants to help people enhance the habitat values of their gardens. It also led to the publication of 'The Real Ocean Grove', a high-quality booklet that helps readers to explore the variety of habitats found around the town. This publication has been very well received, and is used by residents, the tourism sector and local schools.

Ocean Grove Coastcare do loads of fun activities like film and social nights, planting native plants, removing weeds, picking up litter and organising community education events. There's always

something for everyone to get involved in, and we are always looking to expand our group of volunteers. Ocean Grove Coastcare is looking forward to another 10 years (and beyond) of looking after our little patch of coast and engaging with our local community. If you are interested in volunteering with us please contact us on oceangrovecoastcare@gmail.com, new members always welcome.



Red Rock Coastcare volunteers at a Spurgebuster working bee, 2014

Red Rock Coastcare – Phillip Island Conservation Society Inc.

By Christine Grayden and John Eddy

An extensive infestation of sea spurge on the grassy beach terrace at Justice Road, Cowes, prompted the Red Rocks Coastcare group (est. 1996) to move beyond their normal boundaries and tackle this problem head-on. Commencing in March 2014, the project was called, 'Spurgebusters' and aimed to encourage more local participation and remove as much of the weed, in flower and setting seed, as possible. Approval was received and working bees scheduled. We faced an estimated 6,000 m2 of sea spurge – a daunting task!

Over several Spurgebuster working bees, approximately 30 volunteers dug out the weeds before seeds could set and drop.

Bass Coast Landcare enlisted TAFE students to help clear more of the mature plants, which gave us a big boost, and Year 9 students from Newhaven College also contributed.

Spurgebuster volunteers and local beach-walkers then cleared remaining plants and seedlings. Due to Spurgebuster publicity, residents are now very aware of this beach weed and how to handle it. This knowledge has made them happy to help in its control, here and at other island beaches.

Our volunteers regularly monitor the site and remove any missed seedlings. Seasonally, now very small numbers of the weed emerge. It is heartening to see so much self-sown indigenous vegetation growing where once a sea of spurge smothered everything else. Please contact us via our facebook page if you would like to become involved <https://www.facebook.com/picsvictoria>.



I am excited to work closely with volunteer and community groups who are passionate about Victoria's coastline. Being new to the team and beginning my journey during COVID-19 times, I have loved seeing Coastcare Victoria adapt in the way programs are delivered while continuing to engage meaningfully with groups. I am loving the opportunities I get to work with volunteers and very much look forward to the time when I can get out there more and meet my coastal and marine warriors in South Gippsland!

**Tracey Miller-Armstrong,
Coastcare Victoria
Facilitator, South Gippsland**



Princetown Landcare Group

By Kim Morton

With the collective aim to protect our magnificent estuarine and coastal wetlands environment, Coastcare Victoria has enabled Princetown Landcare Group to involve the community in learning and understanding our local natural environment, as well as achieving on-ground project work to help regenerate threatened vegetation communities.

One such project involved the protection of the unique and endangered vegetation community Swamp Scrub. Having once dominated the Princetown coastal wetland fringes and lower Gellibrand River tributaries, this Swamp Scrub had been extensively cleared. Our group has spent glorious times crawling through mozzie-infested swamps documenting little swamp orchids, as well as back breaking days planting many hectares of Swamp Scrub.

The 'Princetown Wetland Swamp Scrub Protection and Rehabilitation Project 2012/2013', enabled by Coastcare Victoria funding, is one of the many projects our group has achieved in restoring Swamp Scrub. The project fenced off over 5.5 hectares from stock, on public and private land.

Consisting of wetland and riparian land, the site was revegetated with tube stock seedlings and in the deeper wetland areas left to regenerate naturally. Being adjacent to the extensive Princetown Wetlands of National Importance, the site quickly began to regenerate naturally. 6,840 Swamp Scrub species were planted over three days by our tireless landcaring group and with help from the local Correctional Services crew.

We hope Coastcare Victoria will be there into the future to help us continue our great work in encouraging and facilitating community learning and participation, as well as physically protecting Princetown's magnificent coastal waterways and vegetation communities. If you would like to help protect this beautiful waterway please contact us via <https://www.landcarevic.org.au/groups/corangamite/princetown/>.



Princetown Landcare Group planting of 6840 Swamp Scrub species.



Port Campbell Community Group Educational Bandicoot Monitoring Program with young people, 2012

Port Campbell Community Group Inc.

By Marion Manifold

The Port Campbell Community Group Inc. has been working since 2002 to protect and conserve the Port Campbell coastline.

Group Secretary Marion Manifold recognised the arts as an innovative method to get the greater community involved and to raise awareness of coastal issues. The Group has implemented many printmaking workshops, art competitions and exhibitions with the support of DELWP and Corangamite Shire grants.

In 2012, the Group received a grant for a project to raise awareness of the Endangered Southern Brown Bandicoot. The project included ecologist reports, educational forums, tree planting and weeding, biodiversity monitoring, print making workshops and exhibitions, school programs and onsite talks, poster and sticker design competitions. The Group also designed, printed and distributed educational brochures to raise awareness of the project and the Port Campbell headland's significant environmental assets.

The Group has continued to reinforce the message of raising awareness on the Southern Brown Bandicoot, by continuing to collect and record photos from remote fauna cameras and supply data to the Victorian Biodiversity Atlas. The Group has been awarded two finalist awards at the Victorian Coastal Awards and has created many partnerships over the years with the local and wider Victorian community and welcomes new members. Please contact us on info@portcampbell.org.au for further information.



Australian Marine Mammal Conservation Foundation

By Matt Montemurro

Victoria is home to an incredible diversity of marine mammal species, and our local communities have held a strong connection with these amazing animals, playing passionate advocates for their conservation and protection.

At the Marine Mammal Foundation (MMF), we believe education is the key to making a difference. While our research allows greater understanding of our marine mammals, sharing our knowledge with the community and those who are working to make a difference will ensure we can better care for our local coastal regions and the species that live in these habitats.

Coastcare Victoria has been instrumental in providing opportunities for MMF to inspire, connect, and empower local communities across the Victorian coastline. Collaboration in Summer by the Sea activities across Victoria has allowed community members to discover the amazing marine mammals living in our watery backyards. Support provided by the annual Coastcare Community Grants program has allowed MMF to deliver our school-based education programs across the state.

Having the opportunity to share our passion for the marine environment with communities across Victoria allows us to also demonstrate the ways in which we can all care for these incredible animals. We aim to empower individual and community action by demonstrating that the simple actions we can all undertake make a positive difference. By rethinking our behaviour towards litter and single-use plastics, recognising and following regulations, or sharing knowledge with family and friends, we can all minimise our impact on marine environments.

Coastcare activities provide a fantastic platform for working and collaborating with other community groups and organisations, sharing the knowledge and passion for our amazing coastal regions. Through Coastcare Victoria, we have also been able to raise awareness of our 'Lakes Champions' citizen science program, along with participation in other citizen science activities.

We are incredibly fortunate to have such amazing marine environments across Victoria, and to have the opportunity to share our passion with so many dedicated volunteers, communities, and organisations. While we can all make a positive difference, working together will allow us to ensure what we do today, creates a better tomorrow.



Australian Marine Mammal Conservation Foundation

Great Ocean Road lucky cap

By Ell Murrell

My partner James came across this Coastcare Victoria volunteer cap on the Great Ocean Road just over two years ago. He grew up on Girai Wurrung Country, north of the 12 Apostles, and lent his hand to cultural and environmental projects in the area, though had not yet teamed up with Coastcare Victoria. However, with the slightly weathered hat having likely blown off a hardworking head and hidden in shrubs bordering the trail, James saw it as a serendipitous gift.

He was just setting off on a bike touring trip from Narm/Melbourne to Larakia Country/Darwin (via Tarntanya/Adelaide), and donned it for the rest of what would become a four-month journey, experiencing the coastlines, forests, deserts, and rural communities of Australia. It sure got some wear and became a much-loved item among the little things he carried.

So much so that James still dons it almost daily, even while the sun bleaches it into new hues and its brim threads further unravel.

Further to shading his face from the sun and rain through his long, pedal-powered trip, this hat proved lucky. Shy and not one for selfies, James included a photograph of it in his online dating profile upon his return. This is where I first noticed it and was instantly intrigued. 'Well, look at that, maybe this guy's one to get to know,' I remember, hesitating. And so, our paths crossed just over one year ago, and the days have been enriched ever since!

I had the chance to gift him a replacement (thanks to Bethany and Bec from Coastcare Victoria rummaging above-and-beyond all expectations) for our anniversary just gone. We're looking forward to cap 2.0's future trips too – look out for it volunteering on a project soon.





Once a Coastcare Victoria facilitator - always Coastcare family

Coastcare Victoria would like to celebrate the 61 facilitators that have come and gone throughout the years. From the Far South West through to East Gippsland, Coastcare Victoria facilitators continue to support volunteer and community groups building networks and developing lasting friendships.

Previous Coastcare Victoria facilitators would like to share some of their memorable stories during their time as part of the Coastcare family.

Tracey Pennington, Coastcare Victoria Facilitator 1995-2010

I can't believe it was 26 years ago that I packed up my life and moved 300 kilometres from my home in Melbourne's south to take up the position of Coast Action/Coastcare Victoria Facilitator in the state's south west, a role that I remained in for over 15 years. When I reflect on my time in Coastcare Victoria I feel so privileged to have connected with such passionate volunteers and colleagues on a myriad of outstanding projects that transformed entire areas and continue to educate and inspire young and old alike.

When I was asked to write a profile for this newsletter, my mind was completely bombarded by the multitude of options! Should I go with my early years in the far south-west district and one of the volunteer groups between Peterborough and Nelson working to protect dunes, saltmarshes, heathlands and habitat for Little Penguins?

Or should I choose a group from the central southwest where I spent most of my Coastcare life, such as the multi-award winning ANGAIR Inc. with decades of conservation and education projects in the region. What about Lornecare's Lilly Pond walk 'reveal', the Lorne School's 'butts on the beach' surveys, the Apollo Bay Coast Action's beach and Hooded Plover protection (take a breath)... or perhaps the Friends of Eastern Otways and Otway Nation Parks coastal conservation work or Landcare networks weeding and planting? That's some in the west of the region, what about the east?

The Wathaurong Co-operative's Indigenous Trail at Point Addis and work with young people through 'Indigenous Connections to Corangamite Coast', or Jan Juc and Torquay Coast Action's years of beach and cliff habitat protection. How can I possibly choose one? – it can't be done!

So many amazing projects and people all with one thing in common...caring for our coast.

I can't envisage a more passionate, committed group of volunteers and professionals anywhere

than in Coastcare Victoria and when I look at the coast today, I often think to myself, 'imagine what this area would be like without our dedicated volunteers'. I know that our coastal and marine flora and fauna are in such good hands thanks to this incredible group of people.

I would also like to pay tribute to much-loved and admired colleagues and volunteers we lost along the way – much love and thanks to you all for your tireless efforts over the years and such wonderful memories with my Coast Action and Coastcare family.



Camel's Lily Pond Walk, Lorne. The naming of this beautiful walk pays tribute to the contribution to the reserve and to the Lorne Community by Michael 'Camel' Callanan

**Michael Noelker, Coastcare Victoria
Facilitator 2006**

I worked with Coastcare Victoria in Anglesea in 2006 and have managed a number of Coastcare Victoria facilitators since this time. I've learnt a lot from the diversity that facilitators bring to the role, from backgrounds in science, to tourism and educators.

During 2006, there was a strong emphasis on facilitators delivering the educational side of the program consistent with the Victorian Coastal Strategy. The more people understood and valued the coast, the more they would be inclined to get involved and help protect the coast through volunteering. I worked with a journalist from the Geelong Advertiser for a series of discovery articles aimed at school age children; one was called 'Dinosaurs in Victoria'. It focused on the many secrets found along the Victorian coastline, including those of dinosaur fossils.

With a focus on education, we would always help any school group who wanted to do work on the coast. This involved finding them a project either with an existing group, or facilitating a weed or revegetation session and talk about the importance of the work.

We also had a lot of fun. Aside from the standard fishing clinics and rock pool rambles, I recall engaging performers to deliver a Summer by the Sea session on 'the secret life of eels'. Their energy levels were out of this world and highly entertaining.



The Secret Life of Eels, Summer by the Sea Anglesea, Aireys Inlet and Apollo Bay 2007



Coastal Connections - Victoria Coastcare Forum, 2011

**Victoria Butcher, Coastcare Victoria Project
Officer and Statewide Coordinator 2010-2012**

I had the absolute privilege of being part of the Coastcare Victoria program from 2010 to 2012, first as a Coastcare Victoria project officer and then as the Coastcare Victoria statewide coordinator. My time with the program was one of the most rewarding jobs of my career and the dedication of staff and volunteers was truly inspiring.

During my time with Coastcare Victoria we rolled out several grant programs with funding from both the federal and state governments. We developed a Coastcare Volunteer Manual and moved some of our Coastline publications to an online format to reduce paper consumption. With the Summer by the Sea program, we moved to a statewide delivery model and partnered with Parks Victoria to strengthen the annual delivery of the program.

I learnt so much from all the staff and volunteers involved in the program and there was an abundance of activity, energy and momentum, which I loved. I think one of the most impressive parts of Coastcare Victoria has been the program's longevity and ability to translate into practical and tangible results on the ground – whether that be through grants to support revegetation or species protection, training and support for volunteer groups or through the annual Summer by the Sea program.

In fact, Coastcare Victoria and Summer by the Sea are arguably some of the most recognised, trusted and respected brands within the Victorian community. Coastcare Victoria has seen the rise and fall of funding over the years, however the dedication and determination of coastal volunteers has stood the test of time, with enormous environmental and social benefits through coastal communities in Victoria.

Thank you to all the volunteers for your hard work and environmental contribution over the years – something to truly be proud of.





Bruce Atkin, Coastcare Victoria Facilitator 2006-2019

I recently retired after nearly 17 years liaising with volunteers who give their time to maintain and improve Gippsland coastal and marine environments. Only a few Coastcare Victoria facilitators have stayed this long but I, for one, never wanted to leave such a rewarding role.

Victorians are fortunate that the Coastcare Victoria program continues to thrive, when it is diminished or non-existent in most other states. We can thank successive governments who have recognised the program makes good financial sense and community and government can achieve a great deal when they work together.

I was proud to be involved with coastal community groups carrying out a variety of projects great and small, all important, and all with their individual challenges and rewards. I'm happy to say that I formed firm friendships with people up and down the Gippsland coast and I do intend to stay in touch – I'll be back!



Bruce Aitkin at the Coastal Ecology and Management Workshop, 2016

During my time, Gippsland coastal volunteers undertook a myriad of projects. A few of these stand out, perhaps because they involved infrastructure or received lots of publicity or other recognition, such as awards from the former Victorian Coastal Council and Landcare Victoria.

But there are hundreds of instances where much work has been done that isn't immediately obvious. For example, ongoing weed control to maintain the integrity of coastal vegetation (weeds are an ever-present challenge), education programs to foster better understanding of coastal environments, fox control for threatened species protection, or even simply regular long-term collection of rubbish along beaches, foreshores and estuaries. I know places that appear to be under long-established native vegetation, that were, just a couple of decades back, degraded, denuded sites, since revegetated by a motivated coastal community supported by funding from government agencies.

Throughout all this, a theme that remained constant was that if the coastal volunteer community received a modest amount of grant money to fund a suite of worthwhile projects, then on completion, the total value of the projects proved to be many times more than the original cost to the government. Provision of government staff to advise and encourage volunteers also makes a big difference to their enthusiasm for continuing their voluntary work.

I've mentioned the fabulous volunteers that the Coastcare Victoria role enabled me to meet and work with but during my career I also got to work with wonderful, inspiring staff from organisations including Parks Victoria, catchment management

authorities, Aboriginal organisations, Landcare networks and more. I was also presented with some outstanding professional development opportunities. A variety of Coastcare Victoria and Parks Victoria conferences and meetings at locations from Mallacoota to Portland contributed knowledge I was able to pass on – enormously helpful in making an effective facilitator.

A fitting finale: during my last Coastcare Victoria facilitators' meeting in Warrnambool in September 2019, was a never-to-be-forgotten visit to the cultural site at Moyjil near the mouth of the Hopkins River, where ancient hearths appear to show evidence of human occupation way beyond the currently accepted time of around 60,000 years.

To all the wonderful volunteers and devoted agency staff I have met and worked with over many years, thank you for all you do for our coastal and marine environments. Thanks also for providing me the opportunity to work with some of the best people in the state.









Recognition of Coastcare Victoria volunteer achievements

Over the years many members of the Coastcare Victoria community have been recognised through the Victorian Marine and Coastal Awards (formerly the Victorian Coastal Awards).

The awards celebrate people and organisations that manage and protect our spectacular coastal and marine environments. They celebrate the commitment and contribution of individuals, volunteer groups and management agencies that excel in coastal and marine management to strengthen what we love about our coastal and marine areas.

We have highlighted groups and individuals who have won Victorian Marine and Coastal Awards over the years through their long-term contribution to the protection and improvement of Victoria's coastal and marine environment.

Recognition for Community Engagement Award

Recognition for 'Inspiring Community Engagement and Education Initiatives' has seen many groups in the Coastcare Victoria community receive this award throughout the years.

2020 Beach Patrol 3280-3284 & Barwon Estuary Project

2018 EstuaryWatch Victoria

2015 Friends of Beware Reef

2014 Marine Volunteers Network & Nelson Coastcare Group

2013 Dolphin Research Institute and Kingston City Council & Disabled Surfers Association - Ocean Grove Branch

2012 Bellarine Catchment Network, Swan Bay Environment Association and Borough of Queenscliff

2011 Warrnambool Coastcare Landcare Group & Reef Scientists Volunteer Angler Diary Program

2010 Reef Life Survey & Surfers Appreciating the Natural Environment

2009 Friends of Venus Bay

2008 North Shore Residents Group

2007 Friends of Mud Islands

2006 Bass Valley Primary School

2005 SEASTAR 2004 Team

2004 Balcombe Estuary Rehabilitation Group

2003 Inverloch Coast Action Umbrella Group

2002 Swan Bay Integrated Catchment Management Committee

2001 Jan Juc Coast Action Group



Recognition for Outstanding Individual Achievement

Awarded to an individual in recognition of their significant and long-term contribution to the protection and improvement of Victoria's coastal and marine environment.

2020 Kent Stannard

2018 Marg O'Toole

2015 Boc Semmens

2014 Uncle Albert Mullett (Lifetime Achievement)

2014 Neil Blake

2013 Kathleen Hassell

2012 Bernie McCarrick (Lifetime Achievement)

2012 Rosemary Birney (Volunteer Achievement)

2011 Don McTaggart

2010 Lynn Murrell

2009 Duncan Malcom

2008 Margaret MacDonald

2007 Harry Breidahl

2006 Dr Mark Norman

2005 Warren Chapman

2004 Rich Vanderburgh

2003 Geoff Wescott

2002 Sue Longmore



2015 Victoria Marine and Coastal Award recipients



2014 Victoria Marine and Coastal Award recipients



2010 Victoria Marine and Coastal Award recipients



2009 Victoria Marine and Coastal Award recipients



2003 Victoria Marine and Coastal Award recipients



2002 Victoria Marine and Coastal Award recipients





Joining the Coastcare Victoria program and team has been very fulfilling. I am inspired and supported by a group of hardworking and passionate facilitators each day, all working towards the shared goal of helping to protect our natural environment. In my short time with Coastcare Victoria I have been equally inspired by the stories of hard work and achievement from the broad range of community groups and volunteers that we support. I look forward to making many new connections in this role and supporting these groups to further thrive.

Ellie Morrow, Coastcare Victoria Facilitator, Far South West

Landcare Awards– Coastcare category

Landcare Awards profile individuals and groups from urban and rural communities who are working together to care for our country. The State and Territory Landcare Awards are held every two years to acknowledge the success and achievements of community landcarers, groups, networks and organisations. Here are some of Victoria's 'Coastcare category' award winners from recent years.



2019 Victorian Wader Study Group for their project work with migrant waders

2017 Friends of Beware Reef

2015 Yarram Yarram Landcare Network

2013 Friends of the Bluff

2011 Friends of the Great South West Walk

2009 Warrnambool Coastcare Landcare Group and the Point Danger Committee of Management

2007 Swan Bay Integrated Catchment Management Committee

2005 Warrnambool Coastcare Landcare Group





SBTS Snorkelling – Inverloch, 2009



SBTS Fossil finding – Inverloch, 2015

SUMMER BY THE SEA



SBTS Bug Blitz – Nungurner, 2017

We've just done three Summer by the Sea activities at Inverloch, including a boat trip today from San Remo. We were fortunate to have Mike Cleeland speaking at two events and were very impressed with his knowledge and his ability to communicate it so well. We have only just retired to Inverloch (having bought land here 18 years ago). So far, it's been a fabulous transition and Summer by the Sea has certainly enhanced that experience.

Lisa and Philip, 2019



SBTS Rockpool Ramble – Kennet River, 2019



SBTS Waterwatch – Seaspray, 2005



SBTS Geology Walk – Walkerville, 2010



SBTS Swan Bay Discovery - Queenscliff, 2019

I loved how Inverloch Dinosaur Discovery was presented by a palaeontologist who had actually discovered a dinosaur! I also liked that it was online as there is no way I would have been able to go all the way to Inverloch from where I live.

Anonymous, 2021



SBTS Rockpool Ramble - Walkerville, 2010



SBTS Geological Walk - Walkerville, 2014



SBTS Rockpool Ramble - Walkerville, 2018



**SUMMER
BY THE
SEA**



SUMMER BY THE SEA

Summer by the Sea

Coastcare Victoria, in partnership with Parks Victoria and a host of volunteers, community groups and small businesses deliver the annual Summer by the Sea (SBTS) program showcasing Victoria's marine and coastal environments. SBTS promotes community stewardship through a mix of fun and educational coastal activities where participants learn how they can help protect coastal and marine environments. The program has been running since 1995, with 2021 marking its 26th birthday.

Summer by the Sea through the years

Each year during the January school holidays, SBTS delivers hundreds of free activities along the Victorian coastline. SBTS activities provide an excellent opportunity for visitors to find out more about marine and coastal environments and to learn about some of the challenges facing our marine and coastal environments.

Over the years, thousands of participants have attended an exciting array of programs and events, including snorkelling, diving, surfing, paddling, scrambling, rambling or strolling.

Crowd favourites have included:

- discovering life in the intertidal zone in rockpool rambles
- snorkelling among the stunning underwater marine ecosystems
- learning about the coastal bush tucker around our beaches
- Come and Try Fishing days
- Aboriginal Coastal Discovery programs
- Waterfront Festival and Scavenge Festival
- Marine and Coastal Connections.

Summer by the Sea plays an important role in educating Victorians about the state's fragile coastal environments.

The knowledge and experience activity leaders share about Victoria's unique coastal and marine environments, and their passion to educate others, inspires the next generation of coastal stewards to protect the coast.

The program would not run without the fantastic volunteers and organisations who support and host events across the coastline.

Summer by the Sea is continuously evolving. For example 2020 brought additional opportunities to engage and collaborate with Traditional Owners. Participants across the state said they felt honoured to be involved in activities led by Traditional Owners, including a Welcome to Country and smoking ceremony by Uncle Shane and Bradley from the Bunurong Land Council, who shared stories about Indigenous artefacts, middens and historical sites of significance.

Coastcare Victoria has also been working to ensure people with a disability can participate in a wider range of activities, and liaising with culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) groups to determine barriers for participation and ways to support involvement. Adapting to the COVID-19 world, 2021 saw Summer by the Sea presented in an online format.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the associated restrictions on public gatherings, uncertainty around the safe running of a face-to-face program led to the introduction of a program format that was entirely online. This online program consisted of live and pre-recorded online activities and self-guided podcasts. All experiences were available for community members to enjoy from the comfort of their own home.

The SBTS 2021 program delivered four live online events, 11 pre-recorded videos, and six self-guided podcasts, engaging with participants from all over the world. The official 2021 SBTS program ran from 2–24 January, however due to popular demand, the program was made available throughout February 2021.

Take a trip down memory lane and reminisce about Summer by the Sea over the years.

These artwork tiles were made by local Port Campbell kids in 2005, as part of the Coast Action Summer by the Sea holiday program. The activity was called 'sea art' and the local school children from Timboon grades P-12 fired them in their kiln (see page 27).

The artwork can be seen today displayed on the wall of the Port Campbell tennis court hut.

SUMMER BY THE SEA



SBTS Surf Lesson – Warrnambool, 2019

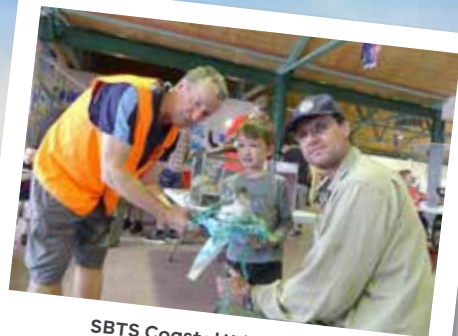
I had heard about the Inverloch fossil site, but never visited. So it was great to hear an expert navigate us through some of the features of the site, Inverloch Dinosaur Discovery.
Anonymous, 2021



SBTS Aboriginal Cultural Walk – Venus



SBTS Rockpool Ramble - Walkerville, 2005



SBTS Coastal Wildlife with Andrew Wegener, 2019



SBTS Geology Walk – Cape Liptrap, 2016

s Bay, 2004



SBTS Geology Walk- Walkerville, 2004

---Surfing Lessons---

The teacher for this event was terrific. He was very competent and was able to quickly build good rapport with both the participants and the parents. He included a component of education on protecting the environment. The equipment provided was also of a high standard. Thank you for arranging this surf lesson.

Anonymous, 2019



SBTS Bug Blitz – Nungurner, 2017



SBTS Rockpool Ramble– Bear Gully, 2013

The accessibility to information given that I live far away was great. The passion and depth of knowledge from Mike presenting Inverloch Dinosaur Discovery was fantastic.

Anonymous, 2021



Uncle Shane from the Bunurong Land Council performed a Welcome to Country and smoking ceremony at Inverloch, 2020

Attending the Marine Mammal Foundation Live Event was great, it was wonderful to learn more about mammals living along our coast - the online format allowed to take a broader look rather than just those found locally.

Anonymous, 2021



SBTS Seaweed bag making workshop - Warrnambool, 2020

---Bug Blitz---

Myself, my two kids and my mum attended the Summer by the Sea Bug Blitz session in Nungurner. Just wanted to say that we absolutely loved the session. It was so engaging for the kids and they learnt so much from it. The educator was brilliant with the kids and really inspired them to learn more about our local invertebrates.

Definitely have been recommending it to friends!

Laura, 2019



Enjoying snorkelling for people with a disability at Beaumaris, 2020



SUMMER BY THE SEA



SBTS Little Marine Scientist with Ben Camm - Walkerville, 2008

Watching Catchments to the Sea,
I really liked the accessibility you
provided by including subtitles for
people who speak other languages.

Anonymous, 2021



SBTS Sea Art – Port Campbell, 2005

These artwork tiles were made by
local Port Campbell kids in 2005,
as part of the Coast Action
'Summer by the Sea' holiday
program. The activity was called
'sea art' and the local school
children from Timboon grades
P-12 fired them in their kiln.

The artwork can be seen today
displayed on the wall of the Port
Campbell tennis court hut.



SBTS Dip Netting – Yanakie, 2009



I feel privileged to have joined the Coastcare Victoria team. Coastcare Victoria has an amazing legacy of supporting the community to work on essential marine and coastal restoration, citizen science, education and engagement projects. The value of this work exceeds the individual projects, inspiring connections to our unique marine and coastal life, leading to meaningful behaviour change across the community.

**Jacqueline Pocklington,
Coastcare Victoria Statewide
Coordinator**



Volunteer training

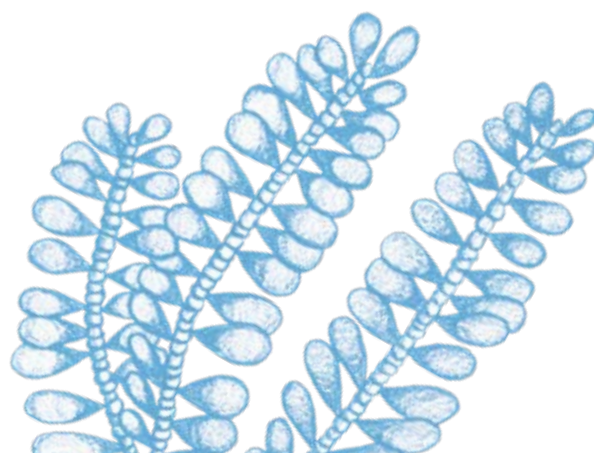
The Coastcare Victoria team is passionate about helping volunteer and community groups improve their skills, expand their knowledge and ensure they have access to safety training. Coastcare Victoria continues to facilitate and present various training opportunities for volunteer and community groups such as First Aid, Strategic Planning, Science Training and Grant Writing.



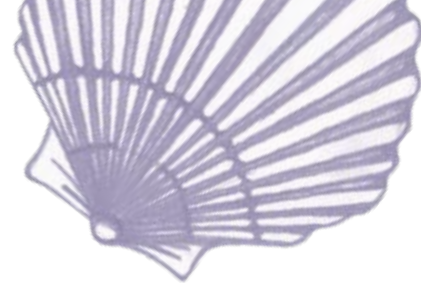
Two Bays citizen Science Training Mud Islands, Queenscliff Sorrento - 2018



Grant Writing workshop, Warrnambool - 2018







Cultural and linguistically diverse Coastcare Victoria

**By Phillip Wierzbowski,
Coastcare Victoria Facilitator -
Port Phillip Region**

Having been the Port Phillip and Western Port facilitator with the Coastcare Victoria program since 2005, I am very proud that the program has been proactive with diversity and inclusive community engagement initiatives. Through direct and regular contact with the community, Coastcare Victoria facilitators can contribute valuable dialogue into strategic discussions and policy development for the program.

When I started in this role 16 years ago, I was encouraged to be inclusive and establish relationships with people with disabilities and with multicultural and Aboriginal communities. Within the first six months, I arranged for 10 clients with a visual impairment to try snorkelling. This was soon followed by a bird identification tour of Serendip Wildlife Reserve, an Aboriginal cultural tour of Melbourne's central business district, a marine life tour of Melbourne Aquarium and establishing a fishing club for clients from Vision Australia.

Since 2016, I have arranged snorkelling for people with disabilities as part of the Summer by the Sea (SBTS) program at Beaumaris and Altona. This would not have been possible without the amazing efforts of Bert Parker from the Disabled Divers Association. The response for participants and the volunteer support for this program receives, makes this an ongoing highlight for SBTS over the last four years, as well as for me personally.



Melbourne Aquarium, Summer by the Sea - 2020

Coastcare Victoria has supported more than 40 multicultural tertiary students who are new arrivals into Australia. For 10 years, these students have displayed professional skills and an eagerness to contribute through a work placement program, while improving their English language skills. One such student played a pivotal role in getting SBTS onto a digital platform for the first time ever in 2016. The skill and expertise that has been brought to the program is invaluable.

Coastcare Victoria continues to work in partnership with Aboriginal community groups on a series of projects, many having led to unexpected and positive outcomes. In 2007, Coastal Aboriginal representatives were invited to a 'Working on Country Together' statewide coastal forum. Learnings from this forum have shaped Coastcare Victoria's

program and engagement strategies for the past decade.

Another Aboriginal partnership program was an investigation into the impact of rising sea levels and inundation on known Aboriginal Cultural Heritage sites in 2010. These sites were located on the foreshore around Port Phillip and created a baseline for data collection with relevant Traditional Owners. Coastcare Victoria has played a pivotal role in integrating Aboriginal presenters and topics to be a standard program inclusion for Coast to Coast conferences.

It's been a privilege to deliver a series of exciting and innovative projects and actively contribute to the strategic direction of the program. Without support and trust from Coastcare Victoria management and input from members of the community, none of this would have been achieved!

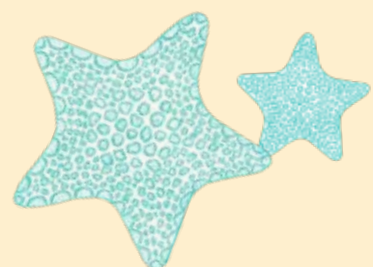


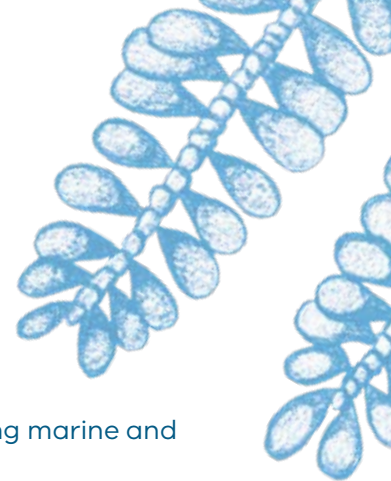
Left to right: Aboriginal stone tools and Snorkelling for people with disabilities as part of the regular Summer by the Sea program at Beaumaris and Altona



Since 2005, I have seen the program respond due to input and feedback from coastal volunteer community. I envisage Coastcare Victoria to continue to be responsive to the needs and safety of volunteers in a shorter time frame. Recording the present and reflecting on the past, will enable us to strengthen our effectiveness and resolve. By sharing knowledge and through innovation, we can prosper beyond the event horizon.

Phillip Wierzbowski, Coastcare Victoria Facilitator, Port Phillip





Coastcare Victoria forums

Over the years Coastcare Victoria has provided biennial volunteer forums to bring marine and coastal volunteers together to learn, network, collaborate and share knowledge.

In 2019 Coastcare Victoria partnered with the Victorian Marine and Coastal Forum to link volunteers with marine and coastal managers and researchers volunteers around the theme of 'building partnerships for our future'.

Coastcare Victoria's forums complement the 'Sharing the Love' biennial forum run by Parks Victoria for marine volunteers on alternate years.

Coastcarers in Victoria's east have also enjoyed the annual Gippsland Coastal Ecology and Management workshops, with presentations by Neville Rosengren, geomorphologist and inaugural Director of the La Trobe University Research Centre for Applied Alpine Ecology.

Coastal ecology and management workshops: a Gippsland tradition

By Bruce Atkin, former Coastcare Victoria Facilitator, South and East Gippsland

In 2009, the South Gippsland Conservation Society, in partnership with Coast Action, presented a two-day coastal ecology workshop at Inverloch. It was such a resounding success that I decided to follow up with a similar event in 2010, thus beginning a Coastcare Victoria Gippsland tradition. After 2012, the workshops alternated between East and South Gippsland.

I had earlier witnessed the success of two larger statewide coastal ecology forums funded by the federal government and wanted to offer a similar experience for Gippsland volunteers to catch up with like-minded people and share stories and knowledge. The workshops became an ideal way for DELWP and its predecessors to acknowledge community volunteers and provide training that could help them in their efforts.

It was immediately clear that geomorphologist Neville Rosengren was a great drawcard and his presentations on the shape of the Victorian coast always captivated his audience. Always keen to return, he has presented at all 11 workshops, tailoring his talks and field trips to the location where the individual workshop was held.

The workshops also featured 'snapshot' presentations from community groups and individuals, allowing presenters to highlight their work, share knowledge and experiences, and create further opportunities to exchange useful information between groups.



Coastal Ecology Workshop, Lakes Entrance - 2019

I loved witnessing the interaction between participants. It was hugely satisfying to see the interest and enjoyment of those attending and listen to the roar of conversation during the breaks. The reaction from participants is summed up neatly in this quote from a survey response:

'The presenters were absolutely excellent and I gained a great deal of knowledge listening to them all. I certainly found Neville Rosengren's topics and talks enthralling. The young speakers did a great job with very professional and educational presentations. I'm sure all in the audience went home knowing much more than when they arrived! Networking like that is great and from a personal viewpoint it highlighted the very similar issues all groups seem to have.'



Sharing the Love Forum participants, Somers 2018

'Sharing the Love' Marine Volunteer Forums (2012-2020)

By Mark Rodrigue, Parks Victoria Statewide Leader, Marine and Coasts

Marine volunteers from across Victoria have been gathering in a coastal location every two years to share their passion for the marine environment in a series of Marine Volunteers Forums called 'Sharing the Love'.

Volunteers first came together in May 2012 in Barwon Heads at the inaugural 'Sharing the Love' forum hosted by Friends of the Bluff. This event was sponsored by Parks Victoria as part of a program recognising 10 years since Victoria's Marine National Park system was established in 2002, and the significant volunteer contributions local communities had made to this system.

This initial forum provided the basis for establishing an ongoing network to connect with each other. Parks Victoria committed at the time to continue supporting opportunities to bring volunteers together every second year. Since meeting in Barwon Heads, forums have been held across Victoria at Tidal River (STL2, 2014), Warrnambool (STL3, 2016), and Somers (STL4, 2018). Well-

advanced plans for 'Sharing the Love 5', which was to be held at Anglesea in April 2020, were unfortunately deferred to 2021 due to COVID-19 restrictions on group gatherings.

The forums provide individual groups with opportunities to meet like-minded people, showcase their initiatives, share ideas, run skills-based field programs, and hold workshops and discussions on selected themes of relevance to groups.

Building relationships between individuals that are often geographically isolated has also been a direct consequence of these events. It's led to more regular dialogue between groups, as well as establishing a strong social media profile with nearly 800 members sharing resources, newsletters, events and information online.

We are all looking forward to getting together again in person when it is safe to do so.



Joining the Coastcare team has been such an exciting experience. I have loved talking to so many passionate and knowledgeable volunteers and being able to learn from them. The opportunity to be involved in projects that protect, enhance and improve our important coastal environments allows me to come to work every day with a smile on my face!

Despite joining the team during COVID-19 restrictions, all my local community groups have been very welcoming and I look forward to meeting more of you in person.

Ally Clark, Coastcare Victoria Facilitator, Bellarine Surf Coast



Winter by the Sea

By Bethany Hunting and Elise Snell, Coastcare Victoria Facilitators

2020 threw some challenges our way, and it was even more vital to stay connected to each other and the coast during these trying times. Winter by the Sea was formed in response to our volunteer community wanting to stay connected online instead of hands-on volunteering or events such as our biennial Marine and Coastal Volunteer Forum.

The Coastcare Victoria team and Parks Victoria planned a series of webinars, which included a speakers' tent workshop and virtual reality room. These webinars covered everything from citizen science projects and marine ID classes, to field trips to Barwon Bluff Marine National Park.

This dedicated forum consisted of nine webinars, three Virtual Excursions, three workshops and one interaction evaluation session from our fantastic volunteers and subject matter experts alike. The series helped keep volunteers connected, engaged and learning, with over 600 registrations for the overall program.

For those unable to attend the live sessions, recorded videos and various resources have been made available to catch up online at parks.vic.gov.au/get-intonature/volunteering/winter-by-the-sea.

It's been a very successful effort and we thank our friends at Parks Victoria, particularly Mark Rodrigue, for this collaboration.

We received very positive feedback on the Winter by the Sea program, including:

'I think this series is wonderful and I hope this type of series continues even when the COVID-19 restrictions have gone for good.'

'Keep them coming, really enjoying the series, and will look into volunteering as my working life reduces.'

'So very interesting to have firsthand stories about the environmental work being done around the state.'

'Thank you for this wonderful series to help us live positively through these hard times.'

'The talks I've attended in this series have all been wonderful - thank you!'



WINTER BY THE SEA



Visit the Coastcare Victoria website:

marineandcoasts.vic.gov.au/coastcare for Coastcare Victoria program and grants information, an interactive map of environmental volunteering groups in Victoria, useful links for volunteers, volunteering opportunities and more.

Follow us on social media:



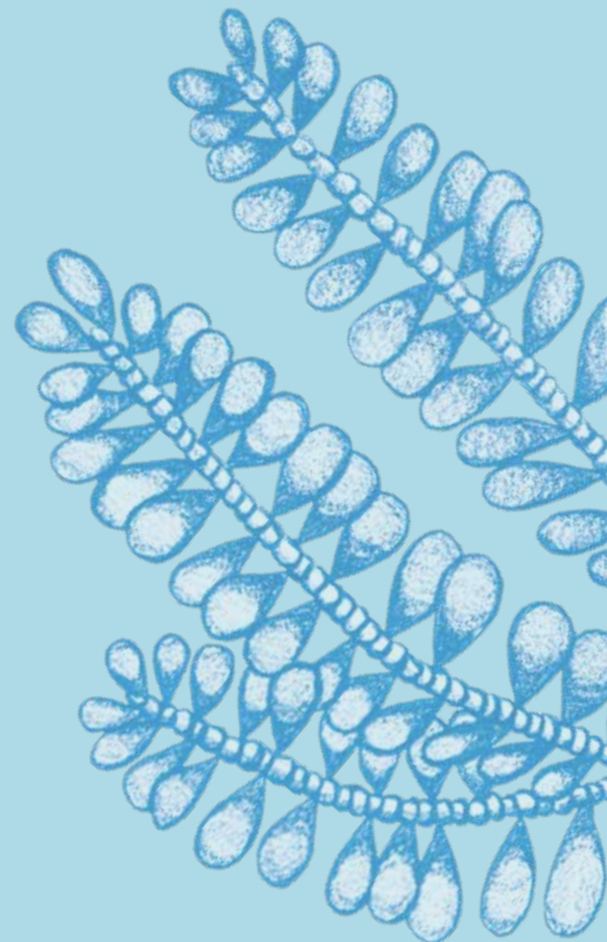
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